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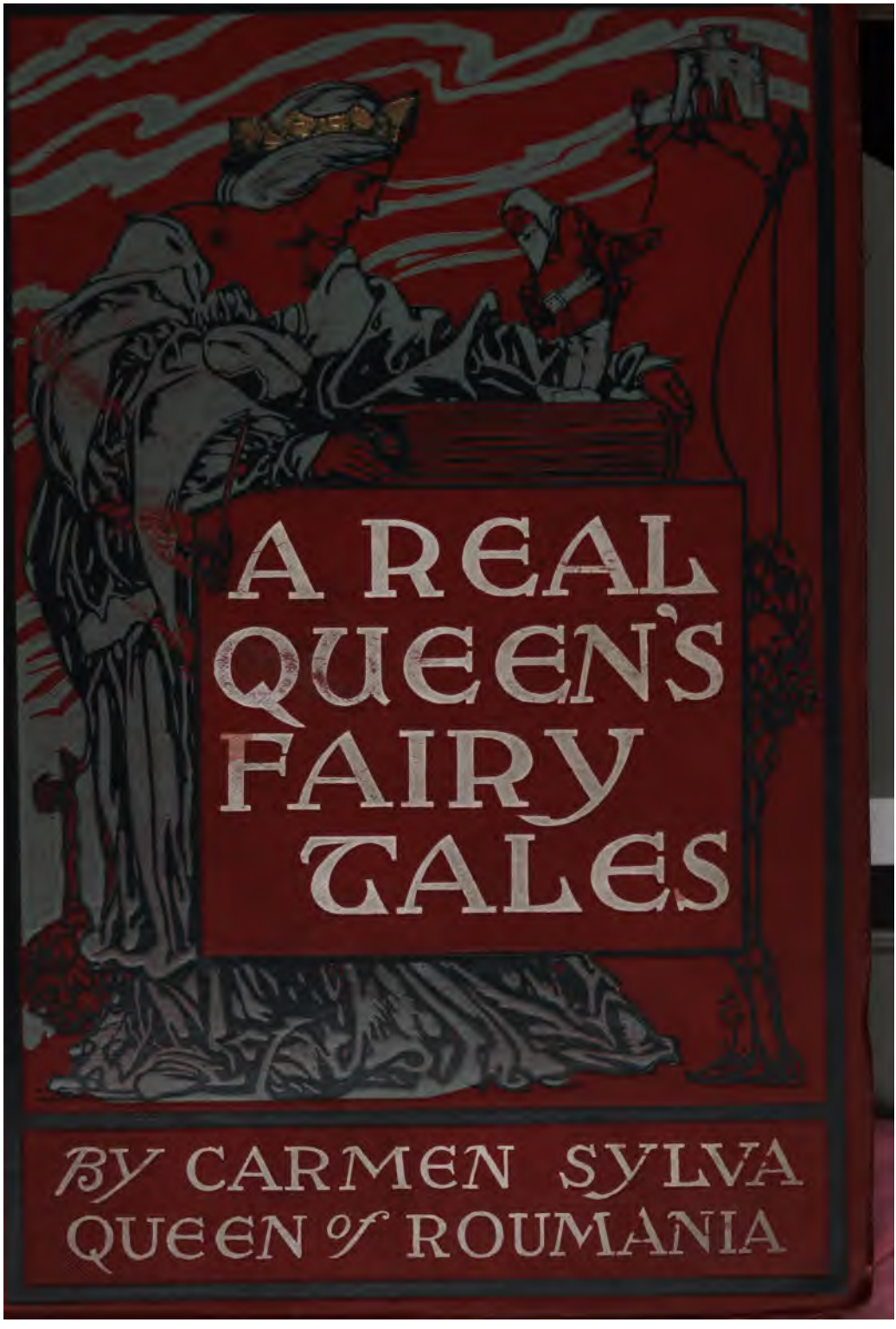
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A REAL QUEEN'S FAIRY TALES
BY CARMEN SYLVA
QUEEN OF ROUMANIA

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EVERT JANSEN WENDELL
(CLASS OF 1882)
OF NEW YORK

1918

Extracts
from Count Count's Log



The Fairy laid her soft hand on the hot little head and he was well again.

A REAL QUEEN'S FAIRY TALES

BY

CARMEN SYLVA
(ELIZABETH, QUEEN OF ROUMANIA)

TRANSLATED BY

MISS EDITH HOPKIRK

ILLUSTRATED BY

HAROLD NELSON AND A. GARTH JONES

DAVIS AND COMPANY
CHICAGO MDCCCCI

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Carmen Sylva
Elizabeth, Queen of Roumania

INTRODUCTION

THE ROMANCE OF A QUEEN—A LIFE-STORY AS WONDERFUL AS A FAIRY TALE

The beautiful and brilliant Queen of Roumania is one of the most remarkable women of modern times, and the story of her life is as strange and wonderful as an Oriental legend.

She is almost a fairy creature by birth, for she was born a Princess, in a romantic castle on the Rhine, just four days after Christmas. In the same castle her ancestors had lived for nearly a thousand years. They were the heroic Princes of Wied, famous alike in scholarship, war, and religion. Surrounding the castle on three sides was a great forest, and as the Princess grew to girlhood it was her chief delight to roam about under the giant trees, accompanied only by two large Danish dogs.

The Princess proved to possess a mind worthy her noble ancestry. At nine she composed verses; at eleven she attempted to write a novel; at fourteen she composed dramas, and acted them, with the aid of her companions and dolls; at fifteen

she studied three newspapers daily, and took a keen interest in politics; at eighteen she had the reputation of being the best educated Princess in Europe. Throughout her teens she was called "The Princess of the Wild Rose," because of her rosy cheeks, sparkling eyes, and love of forest roaming.

Just when Elizabeth was entering womanhood a young German Prince was exciting the admiration of all Europe by his military courage and skill. He was Prince Charles of Hohenzollern, whom the great powers of Europe had just rewarded by placing upon the throne of Roumania, which was then vacant, as the first ruler of a new dynasty.

Now Prince Charming having become possessed of a throne, naturally began looking about to find the Princess Beautiful to help him govern the country. And what more fitting and in accordance with all the laws of fairyland and romance, than that he should ask the most accomplished and vivacious Princess in Europe to be his bride? Such indeed was the case, and they were shortly married, and entered Bucharest, the capital of Roumania, amid such rejoicings and splendid fêtes as had rarely if ever been seen in the land.

Immediately the young bride plunged into

her new duties with all the energy that made her remarkable as a girl and young woman. She quickly learned the Roumanian language, and by her overflowing love and sympathy, and by hard work, had soon completely won the hearts of her subjects. And to-day, after over thirty years on the throne, she is the idol of all her people.

However, into the midst of the Queen's triumphs a great sorrow has come. A year after her arrival in Roumania, Her Majesty's life was gladdened by the birth of a daughter. All the wealth of her rich, affectionate nature was poured out upon the child; and when four years later a fever, which carried off hundreds of children in Bucharest also claimed the Princess Marie as a victim, the Queen suffered a blow which threatened for a time to end her life. She recovered, however, and her grief only served to make her character richer and stronger, and she devoted herself more than ever to developing the individual and national character of the Roumanian people. Out of her private purse she established schools, built hospitals, and founded asylums.

When, in 1877, the war between Turkey and Russia broke out, and her husband was at the front with his troops playing a heroic part in

battle, Elizabeth remained behind playing an equally heroic part in superintending the hospital arrangements for the sick and wounded. Then a wonderful sight was witnessed in Roumania. The Queen cast aside her royal robes and toiled by day and by night, scarcely securing any sleep. She did for Roumania what Florence Nightingale did for England, and what Clara Barton has done for America. And so fascinating and magnetic was the personality of this queen-nurse that it is said the sick were often cured of their fevers through her visits, and the wounded would endure the most painful operations without flinching when their adored Muma Ranitilor — Mother of the Wounded — was present. At the close of the war the wives of the army officers, as a token of their gratitude and admiration, erected in a public square in Bucharest a marble statue of the Queen, representing her, with a red cross on her arm, stooping down and giving a drink of water to a wounded soldier.

It was not until after this war that the Queen began to write for publication, although she had written verses secretly, and pasted them in a large scrap-book, from early childhood. Her first book was written in a peculiar manner. One day the national superintendent of schools came

to her and said he wanted a book to offer as a prize at the end of the year to certain Roumanian school children, and suggested that Her Majesty write one. The Queen entered into the plan with enthusiasm, and in three weeks had written a book of fairy tales, taking old Roumanian legends as the foundation for her stories.

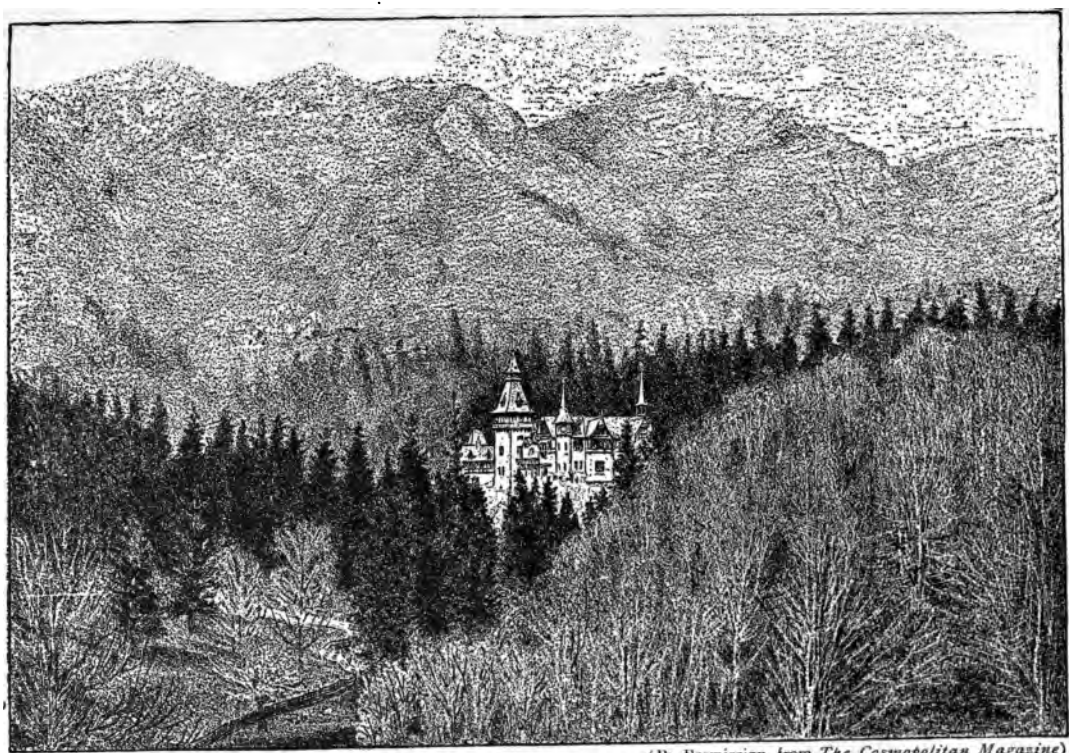
The volume was such a success, and creating it gave the Queen such pleasure, that she turned to writing in earnest, and volume after volume has appeared, bearing the name "Carmen Sylva" on its title-page. One day in each month is now devoted to reading the Queen's books in the public schools of Roumania, and they have been translated and retranslated into divers tongues until her pen has exceeded her scepter in power, and her fame as a writer has passed above her fame as a Queen.

Her literary work is by no means confined to fairy tales, but includes a number of novels, several volumes of poems, numerous dramas, a book of proverbs, a philosophical treatise, and an opera libretto. However, the Queen finds her greatest delight and inspiration in writing fairy tales, and it is worthy of note, as a proof of her world-wide popularity, that the present volume of tales will be published simultaneously this fall in six or eight different countries!

This will probably break the world's record for the first publication of any book in so many lands at the same time.

The Queen is also a skilled painter and musician. She paints portraits and landscapes, sometimes makes the drawings for her own stories, and with wonderful dexterity and rapidity illuminates huge tomes with curious and beautiful designs in the style of the mediæval monks. Though her love for painting is great, her love for music far surpasses it. She will often sit for hours in the gathering twilight at the great pipe-organ in the palace music-room improvising melodies to suit the passing mood—now low and soft as a summer zephyr, now loud and fierce as a midwinter storm. In her girlhood she was a pupil of Clara Schumann and of Rubenstein, and the latter has dedicated to Her Majesty one of his finest compositions, "The Sulamite."

The Queen's capacity for work seems boundless. It is her daily custom while residing in the royal palace in Bucharest during the winter months to rise at four or five o'clock in the morning. A little later she enters the great writing-room—which, with its large palms and towering ferns of various kinds set in urns, its profusion of flowers and its murmuring fountain, resembles a garden more than a room—where, seated at a



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Castle Pelesch. From a drawing by Carmen Sylva.

small desk, she works at some new poem or tale as earnestly as might an author in a garret. She creates and writes rapidly, and makes few changes in her manuscript.

At eight o'clock she breakfasts with King Charles, a little later receives her maids of honor in the spacious reception-room, and during the remainder of the day devotes herself entirely to the welfare of her people—receiving subjects of high and low degree, and personally adjudicating cases and relieving want and poverty. In the evening an elaborate dinner is served in the state dining-room, at which several distinguished guests and a bevy of stylishly gowned Roumanian ladies are usually present. The nights are generally occupied with some public or private reception or ball, of which the gayety-loving Roumanians never tire. Rarely is it possible for the Queen to retire until after midnight, yet she declares that her early morning literary work, instead of depleting her strength, gives her fresh power and mental poise to cope with the varied cares of the day.

The summers of the Queen are spent in very different fashion. With the first advent of hot weather in Bucharest she flits away, accompanied by her maids of honor, to Castle Pelesch, the royal summer residence, high up in the Carpathian Mountain. Castle Pelesch is a marvel of architecture

containing one hundred rooms and halls. It stands far up on the mountain-side, the materials for its erection having been brought up at an enormous cost—it is said that three hundred thousand dollars were expended in laying the foundation alone—and with its many gables, spires, and towers makes a reality scarcely less remarkable and beautiful than Aladdin's magic palace. The chief feature of the interior decoration is wood-carving in imitation of the sixteenth century. The stained-glass windows of the music-room represent scenes from the poems of the Roumanian national poet, Alexandri, and paintings on the walls of the huge salon depict scenes from the Queen's own fairy tales. Her Majesty's private apartments are adorned with costly paintings and statuary, and hung with rich fabrics of gorgeous design from the Orient; and everywhere are heaps and masses of flowers.

The castle is located in the center of miles of well-kept drives, sylvan paths, and rustic retreats. One of these retreats is the Queen's own poet-house. It is a small but most beautiful bower built of reeds and covered all over during the summer months with roses, and shaded by tall, sentinel-like trees. As one enters the charming little hut a score of caged birds brought from many lands salute the ear with a musical medley of welcome,

and dazzle the eye with their gorgeous plumage. Scattered about the room are soft couches and reclining-chairs; but most ingenious and delightful of all its appointments is a perfumed fountain in one corner which gently murmurs all day long, apparently doing its utmost to lull the listener into a condition of poetic inspiration.

To this castle in the clouds the Queen often invites leading authors, artists, and musicians, and devises the most brilliant and original entertainments to while away the evenings and rainy days when the visitors are not enjoying the delights of mountain drives or walks. And on special occasions the guests are given a rare treat in the form of a concert by the Queen's own orchestra—the only orchestra in the world having a Queen as its conductor! The Queen is a charming hostess and brilliant conversationalist. She will talk with the knowledge of an expert and with enthusiasm—and probably in half a dozen different languages in the course of a few minutes—to each guest about the thing in which he or she is most interested.

When King Edward visited Castle Pelesch a few years ago the Queen superintended a series of gorgeous tableaux given in his honor, representing the thirteen letters in "Prince of Wales."

The late Empress of Austria was so delighted and astonished during her stay at the castle that upon leaving it she exclaimed, "I cannot imagine anything more ideal on earth than the life and surroundings of Roumania's Carmen Sylva!"

GEORGE T. B. DAVIS.

THE LITTLE CHAMPION

This was the nickname the other boys had given young Arnold, because he could not see any creature in distress without going to its assistance. If a fly fell into the milk he held out a blade of grass for it to escape upon, and when he one day saw a snake about to swallow a poor little frog he killed the cruel reptile just in time to save poor froggy's life, though the little creature could hardly believe itself to be safe, and could only sit there staring at its rescuer with its great big eyes, whilst its poor little heart still went pit-a-pat, pit-a-pat!

Another time, as Arnold was passing a pond he saw three boys busily engaged in trying to drown a little dog. They had tied a rope with a stone fastened to it round its neck, and threw the poor animal right into the middle of the pond before Arnold could come up to them. Quick as thought he flung off his clothes, plunged into the water, and swam straight for the spot where the bubbles rising to the surface showed the death-struggle going on below. He dived and brought

the poor little dog up in his arms, quite limp and motionless, but yet alive.

"You wicked boys!" he said, panting for breath, and drying the little animal carefully with his handkerchief; "you wicked boys! I will have nothing more to do with you. I will never play with you again!"

"We did not want to do it," began the youngest boy, and then the second one took heart and said: "We really did not want to do it—we all cried, for we are very fond of Fluff, but my father said"—and here he stopped and hesitated, not sure whether to go on.

"My father says we are too poor to keep a dog," the eldest boy broke in defiantly, "and so we would rather drown him ourselves than let any one else have him!"

"And you shall keep your dog, but in future I will feed him. It is little I have, but I will give it you that you may get him something to eat at once. I have only these three pennies, but that will be enough to keep off hunger for the moment."

But what was the surprise of all, when Arnold pulled his pence out of his pocket, to see three gold-pieces—three bright, new gold-pieces, that rang as only gold can ring! The brothers stared at Arnold, who looked just as puzzled himself,

and stammered out: "What does it mean? I never had a piece of gold in all my life!"

The others, who at first could hardly believe their eyes, now began to feel somewhat in awe of him, and said: "Feel again in your pockets; perhaps you have turned into a Goldman!"

But the pockets were both empty, and the children separated. The puppy, however, stoutly refused to go with the little wretches who had tried to drown it, and kept coming back to Arnold and taking refuge between his legs. "Well, then," he said at last, "the dog must stay with me, and you must keep the money in payment. I shall take care of him, and bring him up. And as for the gold, you need not be afraid; it was not come by dishonestly. It must be fairy-money, and if I find any more, you shall share in it!"

Not long afterward, one of the three brothers fell into the pond himself. Arnold heard the screams a long way off, and saw a group of children standing shoulder to shoulder round the edge of the pond, on which floated a big empty washtub.

"He has fallen in there! he is under the tub! he will be drowned!" they all shouted at the same time, while Arnold did the only sensible thing—threw off his clothes and swam out toward the tub. Giving it a little push, he dived, and reap-

peared holding by the hair the already unconscious lad, with whom he swam to shore. The children, who had looked on breathlessly, now crowded round them.

"Is he dead?" they asked.

"No; his heart still beats feebly."

They rubbed him, turned him over on his face that he might bring up the water he had swallowed, and at length he opened his eyes. His brothers had stood by rather crestfallen, and dreading the beating which they might expect for their valiant conduct.

But Arnold with a sudden resolve held out his cap. "Who will give a little help to the shipwrecked sailor? A small contribution, I beg, for the gallant seaman!"

The children thrust their hands in their pockets and wonderful to relate! each copper-piece was instantly changed into gold; even a button, which one boy had dropped in as being all he possessed, was turned into a gold button. They all stared open-mouthed, then perceiving that another of their number, who had pretended to have nothing to give, not even a button, kept looking disconsolately into the palm of his hand, they rushed round him and burst into ringing laughter, for his hand was full of sand and splintered glass.

"You were not quite so poor, then, as you

made out?" asked Arnold, who had suddenly gone up in his comrades' good opinion on account of this new wonder, for until then few had credited the story of the transformation, and rather inclined to believe he had helped himself from his father's money-box.

"Who? I?" said the boy, turning very red.

"Well, well," said Arnold, "let us say no more about it; you need not tell us anything, we all understand! Only tell the truth next time!"

The treasure was too large for the children to keep it secret, so they all accompanied the boy who had just been saved from drowning to his home, and there related what had happened. Many questions were put to Arnold, but he knew no more than the rest. The glass splinters too were shown, much to the confusion of the little miser, and no one ever learned how much he really had in his hand.

Arnold was now made much of, and for a long time people were always expecting that some new marvel would occur. Many thought it a very fine thing to have among them a lad of such wonderful powers that he could at any moment turn pence into gold-pieces—and also gold-pieces into glass, some of the shrewder folk observed. Meanwhile the wonder did not repeat itself.

The little dog Fluff was always close at his master's heels, except when they happened to meet his former owners, and then he took care to go well out of the way to avoid them. These boys retained, however, a somewhat uncomfortable sense of obligation to Arnold, and they resolved to let their playfellows share in the riches he had heaped on them. So they planned a day's excursion into the woods, and all set out with their specimen-cases, filled with bread and butter and sandwiches, slung over their shoulders, and with Arnold as guide, for he knew every inch of the way and all the shady little nooks and corners and freshest streams.

He was on the best of terms with all the wild creatures; the squirrels played hide and seek with him, the little lizards ran fearlessly into his outstretched hand, and the birds hovered close round, for he brought something for each of them—nuts for the tomtits, meat for the blackbirds, apple-pips for the chaffinches, and crumbs for the sparrows.

Just as the children were about to stretch themselves on the grass, to picnic comfortably, there came a sound of wind sighing through the trees, like tones of sweetest music, and before they could ask one another what it meant, a lovely Fairy appeared before them. Her garments were



A lovely Fairy appeared before them.

besprinkled with dewdrops that sparkled in the sun; her snow-white hair fell to her feet, and was even brighter and more glossy than the threads of flax on the distaff she held in her hand, though each of these shone like silver, and was as delicate as the petals of newly opened flowers. She was neither young nor old—she was simply beautiful; and the children stood with their eyes fixed upon her, waiting to hear what she would say. And when she began to speak her voice was softer than the breeze, and sweeter than music, and low as the hum of the bees, and clear as a silver bell. All could hear her; it was as if she spoke to each one alone.

"You have come into my woods without waiting for an invitation, that is why you have not found the table laid. Follow me now and I will lead you to the banquet which I have had prepared for my guests."

They all readily followed the beautiful Fairy who invited them so kindly, and they came to a lovely spot where they had never been before. It was a wide meadow, shut in by beech-trees, and with a brooklet forming a waterfall on the one side. The ground was so thick with flowers their brilliant colors almost dazzled the eyes, and the trees were so full of birds their branches fairly bent beneath the weight.

"Sit down, all of you," said the Fairy, "and the feast shall be served in a trice!"

She waved her hand and the birds came flying toward her carrying rose-leaves in their little beaks. Before each guest was placed a rose-leaf containing a tiny patty, very tiny, thought the children, for their good appetites, but they did not like to say so. Another flight of birds brought little silver spoons, and squirrels followed bearing acorn-cups full of nectar that had so exquisite a perfume and tasted so good the children regretted the diminutive size of the goblets even more than that of the rose-leaf plates with the fairy-patties.

"Now fall to, my little friends, and do justice to my fare!" At this instant the Fairy waved her distaff, and with one accord the birds in the branches overhead began to sing so sweetly many of the children forgot the food and drink before them and could only listen.

And when they did begin to eat and drink, very discreetly at first, taking only little wee morsels and little tiny sips of nectar, so that their kind hostess might not perceive that the portions she had provided would be rather small even for birds, being scarcely a mouthful for hungry children after a long walk—when they did begin, why then they found there was no end to the good things set before them. They ate and drank, and yet

the rose-leaf plates were never empty, the acorn-cups were always full of nectar.

Care, too, was taken that their banqueting-hall should never become too hot. Splendid peacock-butterflies and great blue moths, bigger and more beautiful than any the children had ever seen before, kept hovering round them, fanning them, and setting the air perpetually in motion with the beating of their wings. When all the patties were eaten, birds came and removed the rose-leaves, and more followed carrying beech-leaves and oak-leaves filled with all sorts of delicious little cakes and tarts. And it seemed as if these would never be done, for no sooner did any one think to himself, "I should like a little more of that cake," than a fresh slice was before him. And the squirrels fetched fresh milk in campanula-flowers, and bumblebees brought honey in nutshells skillfully hollowed out by the squirrels. The water, too, was inexhaustible; the nutshell pitchers were always full however much one drank, and the water in them remained as cool as if it were just drawn from the spring. Then came fruit of all sorts, in and out of season, cherries and raspberries, strawberries and peaches, pears and mulberries, apricots and grapes, all piled up on little wicker carts pushed along by deer, who kept running up behind them and giving little pushes with

their foreheads. At that sight the youngsters broke out into such shouts of delight the wild creatures would most certainly all have taken flight had not the Fairy made them understand these children were really not dangerous, they only had a somewhat boisterous fashion of expressing their joy. And when the mirth was at its highest she waved her magic distaff over their heads and they all sank back asleep among the flowers. Their slumber, though it only lasted a few minutes, refreshed them as though they had slept the whole night long, and when they woke, rubbing their eyes, they found that each one had had a different beautiful dream.

In the mean time the little carts had been packed with all sorts of good things. "You may take these home for the little brothers and sisters," said the kind Fairy; "and now I have one thing more in store for you, a great pleasure, the very greatest that there is. You shall all have presents to give to one another!"

And as she spoke she passed her fingers through her hair, and from out the long silver threads she kept drawing some lovely jewel or toy or chased gold ornament, and handed it to each child in turn.

At first they could only stare enraptured at the magic gifts; then suddenly they remembered what

they had them for, and they began giving them away, each one to his or her dearest friend. Only two wanted to keep their presents for themselves, and immediately the precious stones were changed into jumping frogs that hopped away and would not let themselves be caught. Finally the last two children to receive gifts were allowed to choose for themselves. The one was a little girl whose parents were very, very poor, and she wished that her brothers and sisters might never be cold or hungry again during the coming winter. "Good," said the Fairy; "you shall not only have your wish, dear child, but what is more, if ever again you feel afraid that bad times are at hand, then you have only to rub this thread I give you from my spindle and all will go well. But remember the spindle only helps those who are themselves industrious, and to prove it I will show you what I spun during the short time you were asleep." And the air was suddenly filled with shining silken threads, so fine the children were afraid of touching them lest they should break, and the threads began to shimmer in a thousand changing colors, red and yellow and green and blue, and some laid themselves as broad ribbons round the children's hats or as scarfs across their shoulders, whilst others became little flags at the end of straws, which they had

only to put their hands out for. And quickly several more little carts were laden with pretty ribbons and scarfs for the little ones at home.

Now it was the turn of the other child to wish. He was a very small boy, and he took some time to make up his mind. "I want a little live horse to ride," he said at last. That moment the sound of galloping hoofs echoed through the forest, and a beautiful little dun-colored pony, with long mane and tail, dashed out and came straight up to the boy and rubbed its nose on his shoulder, as though asking to be caressed.

"Oh, you darling little creature," cried the boy, beside himself with delight; "but he cannot really be my own!"

"Yes, he is really your own; but you must let your little companions ride him too, and play with him, as long as they do not tire him nor hurt him. For if any one should hurt him, then he would kick out so that whoever had hurt him would never want to mount him again. He must never have a blow, only kind words, and pats, and sugar, bread, carrots, and a handful of oats; he wants nothing more. But you must comb and groom him yourself, and clean out his stable more than once a day. You must take plenty of trouble about him, or one morning you may find him gone, for I insist on all the animals that belong

to me being made happy, as happy as you have all been to-day. And now," she said, turning to Arnold, "I am going to ask the guest in whose honor the banquet has been given what he would like for himself?"

"But I have had a present," said Arnold; "I may not have another wish?"

"Yes, you may!"

"Well, then," said the boy, "I want to ask you, kind Fairy, to pardon these two friends of mine, whose presents the frogs have run away with, so that they may not have to return home ashamed and emptyhanded after such a day."

He had hardly finished speaking when the loveliest precious stones were already in the boys' hands, and delighted, they embraced Arnold, and rushing up to the good Fairy, kissed her hands and stroked her shining hair. And the others seeing this, all crowded round, begging that they too might be allowed just once to touch her beautiful hair. And as they did so a feeling of gladness so intense came over them it was as if the whole world were theirs.

"You little guess what it is I have bestowed upon you," said the Fairy, smiling; "I have lent you the power to do good to others, to make happy all those you love. Now you must see to it that you love many, and try to help many, for

without love the charm will not work. But since my favorite, Arnold, has asked nothing for himself, I shall give him my spindle; he will make good use of it. As often as you wish to help others," she continued, turning to the boy, "you have only to touch it and whatever you want will be there. But it will never grant a selfish wish, nor need you have any fear of its being stolen from you, for it can take good care of itself. Would any one like to try to take it from me?" asked the Fairy.

One boy, bolder than the rest, laughingly put out his hand, but the magic spindle at once began to belabor him with such good will he cried out for mercy, and instantly it was back again in the firm, gracious hand that held it out to Arnold. "Take it; and as for all of you who now laugh so loudly, remember that in Arnold's hand it may still be a benefactress to you. Hold it in high honor, for it has been very dear to me, and has worked for me for many a year, and has helped me more than any of you can understand."

But now when it came to the leave-taking, the children were so distressed and begged so hard, with tears in their eyes, that they might see the Fairy again some day, that she said at last: "If for a whole year you have all been good children, and not one of you has had to be punished nor

to be kept in at school, and no one has been unkind to brothers and sisters or playfellows, nor disobedient to his parents, then you may all meet together again in this meadow, and Arnold has only to wave the spindle once and I will be there in the midst of you, and you shall be my guests once more."

The young people were not altogether cheered by this, for they had their misgivings, knowing very well that they were not always quite so perfect as they might be; however, they all vowed silently in their hearts that they would work hard and that no fault of their own should deprive them of the promised reward.

"Look here," said one boy to another who was often backward with his lessons, "if you don't work this time you will get such a thrashing from the rest of us that you will remember it."

"I think," said the Fairy, who had heard the threat, "it might be better if some of you were to help your companion with his work, as it is perhaps more difficult for him than for you."

They all stopped and looked at one another. "That is true," they cried. "We will all help him, and then he will get on, and we shall all be able to meet here together again next year."

How they succeeded I must tell you some day in another story.

CARMA, THE HARP-GIRL

All along the banks of one of the long, narrow inlets which the lake throws out in all directions into the woodlands round, a band of joyous children were hurrying, shouting for glee: "Carma is coming! Carma is coming!"

And in a little boat that kept appearing and disappearing between the tall forest trees sat a girl, whose sweet childish face was framed in a wealth of curly brown hair tied lightly back by a red ribbon. Her deep-blue eyes, blue as the waters of the lake, had a strange brightness as though they were lighted up by an unseen ray; there was a tinge of sadness in them too at times as they looked out from under the high arched brows, and from behind the fringe of long dark lashes whose shadows swept her cheek. Her soft velvety skin was slightly sunburnt, her lips were of the richest red, her teeth milk-white; her small hands held a harp, source of glad expectancy to the impatient little crowd that escorted her boat. The boatman who rowed it seemed to be an old friend: she had many a word and smile for



Whilst the boat glided onward she began to tune her harp.

him, and pointed out the children to him as they drew near. Thereupon he laid down his oars, and whilst the boat glided smoothly onward she began to tune her harp, and at the sound the birds flocked around and flitted from bough to bough, listening with their little heads on one side for the voice of the one singer who alone among the children of men almost surpassed themselves in the sweetness and inexhaustible variety of her songs.

And now the boat touched shore and the children formed a circle on the grass, while song after song poured from the singer's throat stirring and lifting up their little hearts. She sang of the knights of old, and how they fought; she sang of elves and fairies, of lordly castles and fair damsels dwelling therein, of terrible monsters, of the seas and the woods, and the bees, and the birds; she sang, too, of all that passes in the minds of little children, till her small hearers glanced at one another and at her in sheer astonishment, wondering where Carma could have learnt all these things, of which they had never spoken to any grown-up person.

But then Carma was just like a child herself, a little taller than themselves, that was all. She felt like a little child feels; she only knew that she had come into the world to make others happy — she

knew nothing more; that was all that had ever been told her. She thought she could remember still how an angel had carried her down from heaven in his arms, only not like other children to a good home and loving parents, but to a rose-bush, under which she was found by the good folk who brought her up. They were very poor, this good couple, and often had enough to do to earn their daily bread; but they could not find it in their hearts to leave this poor little being to perish with cold and hunger under the rose-bush, especially as they thought it could not have been without a purpose that the Angel placed it there in their path. They were much amazed to find that the little thing could already speak, and told them how the Angel had flown down with it, and had comforted it on the way by telling it that it was coming down here to help to make the world more beautiful; that it was for that it was sent by God.

She was to make the world more beautiful! The good couple wondered greatly what that could mean. They saw well enough that she was very beautiful; but then there are many beautiful children in the world for whom, it seemed to them, the world is not always so much the better—especially when they do not happen to be at the same time as good and loving as one could wish.

But they soon perceived that this child was as lovable as she was beautiful; not only had she a voice like a silver flute, and a temperament as joyous as that of a young skylark, but her soul was as pure as a dewdrop through which the sun shines, and she could neither say nor hear an unkind word of any one. Everything that was said to her she thought was meant in kindness, and this trusting disposition won all hearts, so that folk vied with each other in showering upon her all that she might stand in need of—fruit, and flowers, and pence; and she often brought home to her foster-parents more than they could ever have hoped for.

"Where do you learn all those songs?" people would sometimes ask her.

"The Angel teaches me them."

"What Angel?"

"The Angel who brought me here; he sings to me in my sleep, and when I wake I know them."

And people shook their heads and went on wondering. Only the children felt no surprise; they thought it quite natural that Carma should sing, just as the birds do, to whom the Angels also teach their songs, else how indeed should they learn them? She told how all the children are brought down here by Angels—she was quite sure of that; and if only children would pay

heed to them, the Angels would teach them many things while they are asleep.

She had a harp that had been given her by an old man who showed her how to play it—as much as he knew himself; the rest she learned from the Angel, and her foster-parents were often astonished to hear her playing in the night, and then to see her next day apparently in nowise tired, but on the contrary as bright and lively as if she had slept the whole night long.

It was an unfailing source of amusement to the children to sail the little boats Carma made for them out of the broad colts'-foot leaves skillfully bound together with sedges; and she made little harps of rushes, with strings of gossamer and spider's web, and placed them in the boats; and the little harps began of themselves to play so sweetly as they floated away on the stream the children were wild with delight, and stretched out their hands to catch the boats, but they slipped between their fingers, or if ever one was caught the harp in it stopped playing instantly. Then the children begged hard to have boats that would stay with them and that they could play with, and the very next day Carma brought them some that she had hollowed out of twigs and branches, strong enough to hold a live bird, and in each of these a little bird sat and sang with all

its might. And when they asked again for harps that would play when the wind blew through them, she made them the sweetest little harps out of rushes and strung them with her hair. These delighted the little ones so much they knew not how to show their gratitude to their dear Carma. One brought her cherries; but how astonished was he when she plaited together the stalks into pretty little baskets, and hollowed out the stones with a knife so as to make little whistles to hang round the neck. Upon this the children fetched her all sorts of fruit from their gardens, so that she might always have plenty of it to eat; and in return she contrived the most marvelous little instruments out of apricot and peach stones, and long pipes out of reeds, and guitars of melons strung with her own long fine hair, and she taught each child to play one or other of these, till she had soon formed a complete little orchestra. And she taught them, too, how to sing all her songs in parts, until people began to come from far and near to hear Carma's choir, which she accompanied on her magic harp. All this made the children take such pleasure in beautiful things one never heard of naughtiness in the whole village; they were always so happy it never occurred to them to get into mischief. They knew it would distress Carma, and for nothing in

the world would they do that. Once a naughty boy tormented a poor little bird by pulling out its tail-feathers so that it could not fly, and this made Carma cry so bitterly she could not sing a note for the whole day afterward. That was a punishment for all, and the little malefactor who had brought it on them was well scolded by the rest. The bird became the pet of the whole village; they all fed it, and they made little nests for it and carried it about, so that when the feathers had grown again it no longer cared to fly away, but stayed among them and was generally to be seen perched on Carma's harp while she sang, trying to join in her songs. And as it was a bullfinch, it soon knew a few bars out of each of the songs quite well by heart—a few notes here and a few notes there—which it strung together in the funniest manner, till the children rolled over in the grass with laughter.

In the very hot weather they made Carma a bower of green branches to sit under in her boat. They were always very curious to know where she lived, for they had never seen her home; and one day she told them she slept among the squirrels in the wood. And the very next day when she came there were five or six squirrels running up and down her harp. They rushed down among the children and were quite friendly,

playing with them, and then pretending to tease them by suddenly darting away into the trees, swinging themselves from bough to bough, and peeping out, as though to say, "Catch me if you can." And in the midst of the wildest merriment Carma clapped her hands and said, "Away!" and they were off like the wind.

Another time she brought with her two lovely little roe-deer, so tame that they would eat bread out of your hand and let themselves be patted and caressed. They would stand for hours watching their own reflection in the water —then again they would leap and bound into the air to such a height and so lightly, it was the prettiest sight in the world. Best of all they liked to come and lay their dear little heads in Carma's lap, looking up into her face with those beautiful soft pathetic eyes, or they would lie down quietly one on each side of her in the boat without the slightest fear. When they came again later they brought their little ones with them—two such sweet little creatures, so pretty and playful, the children went home in great excitement and told all that had happened to an old huntsman, who did not believe a word of it, but shook his head and said, "That is one of your sportsman's yarns!"—one of those stories, he meant, of things no one has ever seen and that

every one knows to be nonsense, like the putting salt on little birds' tails in order to catch them, that no child ever believes in nowadays.

On another occasion when Carma arrived, the bottom of the boat looked as green as if it were strewn with forest leaves, but when she tuned her harp and began to sing, all the leaves stirred and moved, and they turned out to be countless tiny little tree-frogs that lifted up their heads and prepared to sing too. But frogs have only the one tune they always sing: Brekekekex koax-koax! Brekekekex! koax! koax! But these little tree-frogs sang with such good will, the croaking grew louder every minute, and at last made such a din and clatter it was like the sound of an enormous rattle. The children laughed till the whole wood re-echoed, and the hares and the deer started and took flight, thinking the shooting-season must have begun.

But now came the treat Carma had in store for all the children; she gave each of them one of the dear little frogs, explaining that they are weather-prophets and will always tell when it is going to rain, and also that they can be made as tame as any other animal one is really fond of. The children must feed them well with flies and make them very happy and comfortable, and they would soon see what true and faithful little

friends they would have in them. Soon a little frog was to be seen sitting on the dinner-table in every cottage, catching all the flies, and swallowing them down as fast as it could stuff them into its great big mouth. And each child had much to tell of the wonderful doings of his own special frog; and every one of the little creatures had a glass filled with fresh water and with nice green weeds in it to go in and out of as it liked. They were so happy they never thought of running away, but stayed quite contentedly in the homes Carma had found for them. They all had the loveliest names, Leaflet, and Wryface, and Jumper, and Croaker, and Spindle-shanks, and Bandy-legs, and Humpback, and Goggle-eyes, and Leap-frog, and High-jinks, and Jack-in-the-box, and Will-o'-the-wisp, and ever so many more that had never been thought of. But sometimes in a mild night in springtime the frogs all disappeared. They trooped off to attend the great Frog Congress in the wood, and the younger and stronger ones carried on their backs all those who were too feeble to walk. And when they were assembled they began to talk at once in frog language, that is to say, croaking the whole night long, telling how happy they were in their new homes, and each one praising the good behavior of his own boy friend. One little frog,

who was rather lame, told how his leg had been crushed one day by something falling on it, and how the child he lived with cried to see this, and tied up the little limb so gently, and attended to him so well, he was able now to walk about again a little, and hoped to be quite recovered by next spring. Then all the frogs sang one more grand chorus as a finale, and the meeting broke up, so that they were all home again before the children awoke.

One day Carma brought with her a poor little baby girl, whom she had picked up by the wayside very nearly dead with hunger.

"Who will help me to provide for her?" she asked.

"I!" "And I!" "And I!" "And I!" came the answer from all sides. Carma looked round on the eager little faces.

"What can each of you spare to give her?"

"I will give her a petticoat."

"And I a pair of shoes."

"And I some bread."

"And I a slate."

"How stupid," cried the others; "what can a baby want with a slate?"

"We will keep it for her till later on," said Carma.

Every child found that there was something

he or she could do without quite well, and in this way the baby soon had all it wanted. A good couple, who had only one child of their own, took it to live with them, but the baby belonged to the whole village. Every one had contributed; there was not a child who had not made some sacrifice in order to have a share in the common treasure. It was a dear little thing too, that grew quite plump and rosy under the good care bestowed upon it—and very pretty with its laughing blue eyes and mass of golden hair. And when it began to talk how proud they all were. Ah! those were indeed happy days—cloudless and joyous—as if the earth were already a little Paradise.

Carma was sitting one day on the grass with the children round her, singing them all their favorite songs. Little May, as the small child was called, after the month in which she had been found, leaned against her knee listening. And Carma sang and sang, and the forest was hushed to listen to her, and the children stretched round her in the grass had their eyes fixed upon her, for the pleasure was doubled if one could see her when she sang. All at once the sound of a horse's hoofs rang through the wood, and the Prince, whose castle they had often seen from afar, stood before them. He was as handsome

as the dawn of day and as gay and glad as the sunshine.

"May I too listen?" he asked.

But a strange shyness came over Carma, and upon all the children too, although the Prince spoke so kindly. Then he sprang from his horse, flung himself at full length in the grass, saying laughingly that he also was quite small now and might be allowed to listen with the rest.

So Carma took heart and sang, and it seemed to the Prince that he had never heard singing like it before. But the children thought Carma always sang much better when she was alone with them and no stranger there to make her timid, for to-day no new songs came into her head, she only sang the old ones, and her voice was much less strong and clear than usual.

The Prince came again the next day, and this time he led a second horse by the bridle and tied both to a tree while he listened to the singing. When it was over he came up to Carma with his gallant bearing and bowed courteously to her as he spoke:

"My royal mother sends to beg that you would be her guest for a time. She is often ailing, and her sight begins to fail her, so that the days are long and weary, and you were indeed welcome, would you but consent to cheer her with your songs."

Carma hung her head and thought to herself: "I have never yet kept away where there was sorrow to be consoled; why then should I refuse this poor sick Queen?"

And turning to the Prince, she said: "Promise me that I shall return again soon to my little friends here, who cannot do without me."

"Gladly indeed will I promise that," said the Prince, "if you will but mount at once the horse I have brought for you and accompany me."

When the children heard this there was a great outburst of grief and anger; they hung on to Carma's dress with such tears and entreaties she could scarcely tear herself away. But she talked to them gently and persuaded them, confiding little May to their care, and telling them that if they were good she would come back all the sooner. And then the harp was fastened to the saddle and covered with flowers by the children, and Carma rode away with the strange Prince. But to the children it seemed as if the sun had set at midday and would never shine again on their forest and their lake.

Carma's heart was heavy too, but she kept up her spirits with the thought that she was bringing help and comfort to one who wanted her; therefore her courage did not fail her as they entered

the stately castle, surrounded by a rampart with a broad deep moat.

"Mother, I bring you here a harpist who will make all the days of your life a joy to you," said the young King to his mother.

But the old Queen did not look so very well pleased, for in her heart she feared lest her son should fall in love with the fair singer and wish to make her his wife rather than the Princess, with all her money and jewels, whom she had chosen for him. So she only said, coldly: "'Tis well; I will let her sing to me some time when I am tired." And she went on speaking to her son in a low voice of many things, which Carma tried hard not to hear, as they were not meant for her, but which her fine ears could not help catching. This made her very sad, and she begged at once that they would let her return to her friends, whom she had only left believing that she could be of use to give happiness here; for herself she asked for nothing and wanted nothing—her only wish was not to remain where she felt herself to be unwelcome. Now it was the old Queen's turn to feel uncomfortable that she had been so unkind. She begged Carma to stay a little with her to make the days pass less sadly and slowly, promising not to keep her long from those she had left.

Carma had a little room given her at the top

of the palace, so high up, just under the roof, that to her great delight she could see from the windows the lake and forest where she had lived and sung—yes, she even thought she could distinguish the crowd of her little friends, whom she had quitted so unwillingly, and as it now seemed to her, for no good. Then she saw the King ride out, and at once she was sent for by the Queen-Mother to come to her with her harp. She was a little frightened at first, thinking she might be scolded, but this time the Queen was very gracious telling her to sing and listening with real pleasure. After a time the Queen said to her:

"Do not think, dear child, that you are unwelcome here. Only one thing troubles me—the fear the King might find you fairer and more lovable than the Princess I have chosen for him. Promise me not to listen to him should he ask you to be his wife."

"Have no fear, dear lady," replied Carma, with a smile. "I did not come here to seek a crown and kingdom, but simply because I had been told that you were ill and that my singing might soothe you. But since you are well and I can be of no use here, I beg that you will let me take my leave at once, without the King knowing it, and go back to those who love me. You did not see how the children wept and clung to me

when I came away, and how my old boatman growled and grumbled. I am accustomed to bring joy with me wherever I go, not to be received coldly and unwillingly."

"If I could but be assured you are not aiming at the crown, how gladly would I keep you here with me!"

"Rest quite assured, noble Queen, that your crown has no temptations for me. Ill could I resign myself to dwell forever shut in between four walls. I must be free, free to roam where I please, like the birds in the woodlands."

"I would dress you in fine clothes."

"I care not for fine clothes; they would only make me unrecognizable to the children who are so anxiously awaiting me."

"If I could but trust you."

"That will come, dear Queen; you will learn that there are human beings who covet neither your lands nor wealth, but prefer to remain poor and free."

So far, so good; but Carma had reckoned without the passionate pleading of the young King, who entreated her to become his wife, as he loved her better than his life or his throne, or anything he could call his own upon earth. She remained firm, repeating her request to be allowed to return to her dear forest, and begging him to

give orders that the great drawbridge be lowered to let her pass.

"It was ill done on your part, Sir King," she said, "to pray me to come hither because your Lady Mother was so aged and feeble, that I might be a help and comfort to her. See now how well and strong the Queen is, and neither needs nor wishes for my services; and so you have enticed me here on false pretenses and made me unhappy to please yourself."

"It is that I love thee so; I would lay my whole kingdom at thy feet and give thee jewels and horses, and all thy heart can desire. Only be my Queen."

"Your Queen already awaits you. I am not wanted here, for you can be quite happy and contented without me, whilst to the little hearts over there I am the only happiness in the whole world. Oh, that I had never listened to you!"

At this the King grew so angry that for days he did not speak to her nor look at her, and then again he began to torment her anew, till she was so sad her eyes were always full of tears.

But how her heart beat when one day from out the window of her little room she saw a crowd of children stream out of the wood and across the meadow and hurry toward the castle, where they stopped and knocked at the great

gates, asking to be admitted. Carma rushed down the long flights of stairs and begged the porter to let her out, since she was not a prisoner; she had done no wrong; she only wished to show these children she was still alive. In the midst of her entreaties the King rode up, and the portcullis was raised and the drawbridge lowered to let him pass. He asked, astonished, what all these children were clamoring for.

"Carma! We want our Carma back again! She has been here long enough!"

When the King heard that, and when he heard, moreover, how Carma was on her side imploring to be let out, his rage knew no bounds and drawing his dagger he plunged it into Carma's bosom, exclaiming: "There is your Carma! Take her then, since she will not stay with me."

The children gave a great cry as they saw her stagger and fall, but all the same they insisted: "We will have Carma; and if she is dead, we will kiss her back to life again."

So she was carried out to them, and she smiled faintly and spoke: "Take me out quickly into the forest, and ask for my harp, and you will soon see I shall be well again."

Some of the children summoned up courage out of their love for Carma to go and ask for the harp, and it was brought; and then the draw-

bridge rolled back again and the heavy portcullis fell, so that none might see the King's despair at his mad deed. He tore his hair and stamped and raved, reproaching his attendants that they had not kept better guard over his treasure.

Meanwhile the children stood around Carma, who lay there with the dagger still in the wound, and seemed to grow feebler each moment, as if about to die.

"What can we do?" they said, in great perplexity.

"We are not strong enough to carry her without hurting her."

"Take some branches and make a litter on which you can carry me," whispered Carma, faintly, for her strength was going fast.

So they hurried to cut down branches, and wove them together in the form of a litter with cross-ends, so that as many of them as possible could take hold of these—in front and at the back and on both sides—and lift it from the ground and carry it away.

But as they came near the forest the old boatman called out to them to stop and place their burden very carefully on the ground, as the shaking must drive the dagger farther into the wound, and with gentle hand he drew out the dagger, but the blood at once burst forth in a purple stream.

In their alarm the children thrust their little handkerchiefs into the wound to stop the blood, and to their amazement these were changed at once into the prettiest purple neckerchiefs. Then others who had run away and hidden themselves at sight of the blood, instead of trying to help, came up wanting to have their handkerchiefs made equally beautiful; but as they dipped them in the blood it stopped at once, and they had nothing for their pains.

In the mean time the old man had gathered broad leaves at the water's edge and laid them on the wound, and moistened Carma's pale lips till she revived. By evening she seemed almost well again—and smiled to welcome her foster-parents, who came hurrying to the spot chiding her gently that she had left them so suddenly, riding away in such hot haste without even asking their counsel. She begged them to forgive her—she knew that she had acted foolishly—she had put faith in the King's fair words, and he had spoken falsely. She went home with the old people, who tended her lovingly till she was well and strong again; and when for the first time she reappeared among the children in their old woodland haunt there was great rejoicing. They brought with them to bid her welcome all the little tree-frogs she had once given them; and each



He fell on one knee before Carma and implored her to forgive him.

little frog clasped with its foreleg a tiny sunshade (the sunshades were mushrooms, some round, some flat, some broad, some long) and the effect was so irresistibly comic that Carma laughed aloud, and that was the first time she had laughed since she came from the palace.

"Since we are all so happy again, I will make something beautiful for you," she said; and lifting her fingers in the air, she called out: "Come! Come! Come! Come!"

And the whole wood was in a moment brilliant with fireflies—she caught them in her hand and placed them in the children's hair and in her own, till they all looked as if they were crowns of stars.

And then in all that dazzling light they formed a circle round her and began to sing their songs again as in old days. They sang them all from beginning to end; as fast as one was finished they remembered another—it was a glorious evening!

But suddenly Carma grew deathly pale, and the frightened children gathered close round her, for there, looking so sad, and with tears in his eyes, stood the King. He fell on one knee before Carma and implored her to forgive him—he had been ill or he would have come sooner. She must take pity on him and return and be his Queen.

But Carma shook her head and said: "You stabbed me for love and you deceived me with your falsehoods, never will I go with you again! I will stay here with the children who love me and can not do without me. The Queen-Mother told me you should wed a fair Princess with broad lands and rich jewels. Marry her, then, and forget me, and leave me here in peace, where I am so happy that I will remain forever!"

And as he still persisted in his entreaties, that was more than the children could stand, and they pulled him, and pushed him, and hustled him, and pelted him with flowers till they had driven him from the wood. Then they came back contented, and all unknowing that it was a little revolution they had just made, for such things had not been heard of then; to them it was merely childish justice. How could they let that man carry off Carma when he had hurt her and made her unhappy! No, he did not deserve her; he could obey his mother and marry the other one, but their Carma should never be his; he had lost her by his own fault! She was born for singing, not for marriage. She was their Carma, only theirs. They would make her so happy that she would never be able to think of any one else.

It was only strange that she did not hate the King; but whenever she saw the mark the dagger

had left, then she sighed softly to herself, that the children might not notice it.

But the dagger itself she planted in the earth, and it took root and grew, and a splendid rose-tree sprang forth from it, as tall as a beech, so that they could sit in its shade and inhale the perfume of hundreds of roses.

THE LITTLE PEOPLE

It was a very poor village in the Eifel Mountains, in the poorest part of Germany, where scarcely anything will grow except whortleberries, which the poor people gather and sell for a few pence. It is bitterly cold up there, and when the ground is hard-frozen, and the wind howls through the stunted fir-trees, then sometimes wolves also may be heard howling there. These are bad times, when the children's hands and feet are blue with cold, and their poor little empty stomachs are cold also. Once, long, long years ago, on such a winter evening as that, when the cold pierced to the marrow of one's bones, and inside the houses there was no warmth to be had, so that the poor folk sat there with their teeth chattering with cold, some of them looked at one another sadly, and said: "To-morrow will be Christmas Eve, but we have no money to buy a single candle, and as for a tree, fire-wood is far too precious for us to afford that."

The children said nothing; they only huddled closer together in the corner, to try to feel a little

less cold, thinking how in better years they had always had a tree, and even if there were only two candles and a single apple on it, still it made it feel like Christmas. But this year there was nothing at all—nothing but cold and hunger and darkness, for they could not afford oil for the lamp.

All at once there was a sound of little sledge-bells—many, many little bells, as if hundreds of sledges were approaching, and then the trampling of horses' hoofs was heard on the hard-frozen ground. The people rushed to their doors, and what did they see? Sledge on sledge, no bigger than children's sledges, drawn by tiny ponies and with a strange little man sitting in each. Each of them held a little Christmas-tree before him, and the whole sledge was packed full of little parcels. There were warm dresses and coats, and shoes and gloves, caps and hoods, and all sorts of lovely things, such as the poor children had never even heard of. Soon the whole village was on foot and in the street to see these wonders. But no one dreamt they could be for them; they thought the friendly little carriers were simply resting here for shelter from the approaching snow-storm, on their way to the fortunate children for whom these Christmas gifts were destined.

What was, therefore, their astonishment as one

of the sledges pulled up before every cottage in the whole village, and out of each stepped the little driver with his long white beard, and his arms full of parcels containing the most delightful things. The next moment the Christmas-tree was lighted up, a good fire was blazing in the stove where a minute before not a spark was to be seen, and the kind little dwarf was laying the table—putting on it such a splendid sausage and such a big loaf of bread! And the same took place in every house, only where there were more children there was more food, and more presents, and more warm clothes. The clothes were as if they had been made for them, and the shoes fitted perfectly, though no shoemaker had taken the measure.

When the first surprise was over the children joined hands and began to dance around the table, singing for joy. And what a delicious smell that was, of something cooking in the big saucepan on the fire, and such good soup, with bacon, and cabbage, and even meat in it! And there seemed to be no end to it, and to all the other good things! Some of the hungry children fell at once upon the great loaves of bread—it was so long since they had seen such a good meal! And their mothers looked on in speechless happiness to see their little ones so well cared for—some even shed tears of joy, and others turned to

thank their little benefactors, and to ask wonderingly: "Whence do you come?" "And who sent you to us?" "And who could have told you my children's age, and how many people are in our house?"

But when they looked around there was nobody there! The Little People were gone; the ponies also that had drawn the sledges had vanished, and vanished noiselessly in spite of their bells. Only the sledges themselves were left piled up with faggots and logs of wood. The little people, who had come with their hands so full of gifts, had quite disappeared, and it was useless to look for them, for by this time the snow was falling so fast you could not see a handbreadth in front of you.

What a beautiful Christmas that was in the poor little out-of-the-way village, that seemed so forgotten and forsaken by the rest of the world that its inhabitants had even lost courage to ask for help! They feasted and were merry, and rejoiced in the warmth and comfort. And the children soon began to look as if they had never known want, so quickly did they profit by the good cheer. But things could not go on very long in that manner. After a time, everything began to go badly again, and these poor people who had for once been happy and comfortable

were quite perplexed to know what they should do to improve their condition permanently, since they felt it would be unreasonable to expect that the same marvel would repeat itself. But while they wondered helplessly what they should do, things went from bad to worse.

In this extremity, some children had the brilliant idea of going in search of the little friends who had once come to their assistance, and beg them to help again. They remembered quite well what the Little People had looked like—not much taller than themselves, with long beards, and leather aprons, and leather hoods drawn over their heads, and each of them carried a lantern at his side and a hatchet stuck into his broad leather belt. Yes, they were quite, quite sure they would know them again, these three children—the only ones who had taken their eyes a minute off the Christmas-tree and the presents and the good fare, to look at the unknown friends who were providing all these good things. They felt rather confused when they remembered that the Little People had not had a word of thanks—how then could they ask fresh favors from them? But they must make the attempt, the poor little things told themselves; there was nothing else to be done. The first child was a little girl of nine called Lieschen, whose father had met with an

accident out wood-cutting, which would make him helpless for weeks, perhaps months to come. The two boys, whose names were Hannes and Fritzchen, were ten and eleven years of age. All three dressed themselves in the clothes which the Little People had given them, for they thought their kind friends would more easily recognize them in these, and without saying a word to any one for fear their parents should stop them, they set out secretly one afternoon when they were supposed to be going to school. When that evening it was found they did not return, nobody knew where to look for them. It was indeed a difficult matter, for the snow was falling so fast that all trace of their footsteps was lost, so the parents tried to comfort themselves by saying that in such weather the children would not wander far, but would certainly turn in at the very first shelter by the way. But they searched and searched in vain the whole night long, calling the children's names, and when morning came they were really alarmed. They still hoped, however, that the children must have reached the next village, and would be brought back to them from there.

In the mean time, the little wanderers had struggled bravely through the night; they had no money, but they felt sure of finding the Little People by daybreak. So they stopped nowhere,

except once to ask for a little milk and bread at a distant farm, telling the people there that they were sent out on an errand. What the errand was they did not say, and they set out again at once, so that there was really nothing to tell the parents when they came with their inquiries. After that, nobody could give any information—they had been seen once or twice as they wandered on, that was all; so the parents soon gave up all hope of ever seeing them again. It was generally believed they must have fallen asleep by the way and been frozen to death, and that when the thaw came their little bodies would be found again. But the thaw set in at last, and the spring returned, very late certainly, but still the trees did become green again, and a few blades sprang up in the corn-fields, and the potatoes and turnips began to put forth their scanty leaves—but of the children nothing was heard.

They had really fallen asleep in the snow by the wayside. They lay there with their little hands tightly clasped, and the snow would soon have covered them and there would have been no chance of saving them had not the Little People been on the watch. They never forget those whom they have once befriended, and keep looking after them to see if their kindnesses have borne good fruit. They had often shaken their



They lifted the sleeping children without *waking* them.

wise little heads with the long white beards over the helplessness and inactivity of the villagers, who seemed incapable of an effort to retain the comfort they had tasted. One or other of the good dwarfs constantly gave a look that way, to report how things were going on, and in this manner they learned how three children had set out, full of confidence, to find the only friends they knew of. They let the three little seekers wander on till they were at a certain distance from home, so that they might not be able to turn back. Then, when hungry and tired out they sank down in the snow, the Little People were already on the spot. They lifted the sleeping children without waking them and carried them away through the silent night. From time to time they turned round and blew over their foot-marks in the snow to efface them, so as to leave no track by which they could be followed.

They took the children right down inside the mountain, into a magnificent hiding-place where it would never have occurred to any one to look for them, and before all else they took care to let them finish their good, refreshing sleep. But who can describe the delighted astonishment of the little ones, when they opened their eyes and saw that they had really found the way to their kind friends! They seemed to be in an immense cav-

ern or vaulted cave, in which crowds of Little People were busy at all sorts of work. For a time they lay quite still, staring with wide-open eyes at this new sight, without speaking a word. At last Lieschen whispered very gently:

"Hannes, Hannes! are you awake—or are we both asleep still?"

"I don't know," replied Hannes, in just as low a voice. "Fritzchen! Fritzchen!"

Fritzchen rubbed his eyes. "Yes, I see them, too. What do you see?"

"Our friends," whispered Lieschen.

"So do I," said Hannes; "and I see a great light besides."

"And I, too," chimed in Fritzchen.

"I can see the little friends at work," Lieschen now remarked.

"I see them quite well, too," said Hannes. All three children now sat up, and the Little People crowded round them, bringing them the best things to eat and drink, and telling them how they had been watched over, so that no harm should come to them in the snow.

"We knew you were coming to us," they said, "and we certainly would not let you be frozen on the way. But are you three the only ones?"

"I think so—I am not quite sure," stammered

Lieschen in some confusion; for she suddenly remembered that they had run away, and that they were here as uninvited guests.

One of their hosts seemed to read her thoughts, for he made haste to reassure her: "You acted rightly, my child, in coming to us to seek help for those at home. We have always hoped that more of you would remember us, and try to learn the way out of such misery. It has been somewhat of a disappointment to us to see how little good we were able to do your village, and that it so soon fell back into its old state of dirt and untidiness and discomfort. One cannot help those who will not help themselves, so we felt it would be quite useless for us to come again."

"Oh! what a beautiful time it was when you came to us!" sighed Lieschen.

"But we knew you would not forget us, for one does not forget those whom one has been kind to," put in Fritzchen, trying to be very polite, and the dwarfs all laughed heartily but very good-naturedly at his solemn air. Lieschen now asked if there were any work they could do, so that they might not be altogether a burden to their kind friends.

"Bravo! my little maid," said one of the little Longbeards, looking at her kindly. "That pleases me; and now you may be sure that I will

find work for you—work that will give you pleasure and also be of use to you all your life long. The boys, too, shall learn something useful, for it is not for our amusement we have enticed you here, but for your own good, that you may learn how to earn an honest living. My name is Mushroommite, and whenever you want me you have only to call for me. You will learn all the other names in time, but there are so many you could not possibly remember them all at once."

"We are much obliged to you, good Mr. Mushroommite," said Lieschen, for being a little girl, she was readier with her tongue than the boys. Their new friend's own special duty was the providing and preparing of mushrooms for the general repast, and this he understood so thoroughly one could hardly believe what delicious dishes he invented. Even the so-called poisonous kinds he could make use of, for he had discovered a way of cooking these that took out all the poison and made them good to eat.

The children had at first to accustom themselves to the strong light that lit up the immense vaulted galleries everywhere. One could not see whence it came, for there was not a lamp burning anywhere, but the light was the same in every winding passage and every angle, and work was going on in every nook and corner.

"Look," said Mushroommite, "there are some of our people coming back with the wool the sheep have made them a present of; they just stroke gently over the good creatures' coats, and if any of the wool clings to their hands they may bring it away with them, and in return we give the sheep herbs that make them give better milk."

"And what do you do with the wool?" asked Lieschen.

"That you shall see for yourselves; come this way." And the dwarf led the children to a place where there was an underground waterfall turning a mill-wheel. "Here are our great felt-works; hundreds of us are always employed here, rolling and beating and pressing the felt. You also shall learn how it is done. He who is at the head here, and gives instructions to all the others, will teach you. He is called Woolgatherer, and he is more skillful at his business than any one else. He has a way of handling the wool that makes the very poorest kind come out of his hands quite soft and supple, and even in washing it his touch is something different from all the rest. There you can see some of his best workmen at work, those to whom he gives out the finest and choicest wool. They are busy making shawls and rugs and wraps of all sorts, as fine and soft as Indian cashmeres

or as the woolen fabrics made by the Shetland Islanders, or the inhabitants of Orenburg, whose shawls can be drawn through a ring. They are as fine as spider webs, and at the same time so strong they will last for years. Look! How quickly they work! Have you ever seen anything like that before?"

The children were allowed to touch the beautiful, soft woolen fabric, and when Woolgatherer saw their delight he presented each of them with a complete costume of it—so light and warm, and close fitting, they felt they had never known what it was to be comfortably dressed before. Lieschen had a little shawl as well, that was so pretty she could hardly speak for joy. But she did manage to say "Thank you," and she reminded the boys in time, too, for they had forgotten everything in the pleasure of the new clothes. But the kind little Woolgatherer did not want any thanks—he was only anxious to show the children all the wonders of his factory. He pointed out to them how the waterfall was employed to turn the mill and how the water could be stopped when necessary, and then he took them to see the looms; thousands of shuttles at work, all flying through the air at the same time, guided by invisible hands. Mushroommite whispered to them that all this was their guide's own invention. "We are

very proud of him," he said, "and in the other mountains they quite envy us his cleverness."

"Are there any other Little People like you in all the other mountains?" asked Hannes.

"Yes, in all; but there is quite different work going on in each. Sometimes we tell men in their sleep of the wonderful things we make, and when they wake they invent something before which the whole world stands lost in admiration. But we laugh to ourselves, for we know where they learned it. So many things we know here, long, long before they reach the outside world. But now, children, come along, for there is so much for you to see, before bedtime."

"But you; when do you sleep?"

"We never require sleep ourselves—we are so small there is less wear and tear of our bodies, and then we have such refreshing springs that if we are a little tired we have but to bathe in one of them, and all our fatigue is gone and we are well and strong again. But that is all—we never rest, for what would become of the world if the work going on inside it were suddenly at a standstill? It is we who keep up the great fires inside the earth, so that the hot springs may always come buddling to the surface for the use of human beings, and so as to supply them with all sorts of things they stand in need of. We are as old as

the rocks here, and we shall last as long as the earth itself. We are neither young nor old—we are a part of the mountain, we belong to it, just like the crystals and precious stones hidden in its sides! Would you like to see our treasure-house?"

As he spoke these words, Mushroommite led the astonished children through narrow passages, hardly high enough for them to stand upright in, till they reached a small grotto, where he pushed aside a rock, and suddenly they were astonished by a strong light that came from an immense pile of jewels, sparkling and shining, as if each one had a light inside. Fritzchen opened his eyes very wide. "Have you gold, too?" he asked.

The dwarf smiled. "Gold? Why, our walls are in great part of gold, and the further down into the earth one goes, the more gold is to be found—the center of the earth is made entirely of gold."

"Then I will be a miner," exclaimed Fritzchen.

Mushroommite looked at him half pityingly, half contemptuously, and pushed the rock back again in its place, so that there was no trace of where the opening had been. "Nobody can find the way here alone," he said, "and if he did succeed in finding it the earth would at once fall in



A strong light that came from an immense pile of jewels.

upon him, so that he would never find his way out again alive. We may only let as much of our gold and precious stones be taken out as is good and useful for mankind. Ah, if you did but know what it is like in the gold-diggings you would rather stay here all your lives with us! But I see Fritzchen is in a brown study, thinking of all the riches the earth contains. But there are better things here, and much more necessary to man than gold. Down here are all the buried forests which we once knew in their glory, and which we have turned into coal-fields, and take care of for men. And men prize that which they call coal even more than gold, for one can live without gold, but it is impossible to live without warmth."

This the children could understand quite well, for they had so often suffered from the cold, it seemed to them quite natural to value coal more highly than gold. Only Fritzchen felt an uncomfortable burning sensation at his heart, but did not know that it was the greed of gold that had been aroused there. It was quite well known, however, to their little friend, and he led them back in a roundabout way so there could be no possibility of their finding the grotto again.

"If I only had those jewels," thought Fritzchen, "I should be rich and never require to work."

But as if the dwarf had read his thoughts the answer came: "We must never let men have too much of our riches at a time or else they would leave off working, and it is for the purpose of working that they are on earth for the short time they are there."

"The short time?" said Hannes.

"Must not the time of a human life seem a short space to us, who have been here so many ages, who are as old as the oldest rocks, far older than the coal-beds?"

"And are you content to stay here always—do you never want a change?"

"Never! Our life here suits us because it is so busy. We have not time to ask ourselves if, perhaps, anything else might please us better. We work and work, and live together in harmony, and the time never hangs heavy on our hands. Very often we go up into the forests in the daylight, or watch the elves dancing by moonlight in the fields and meadows. We often make them a present of the finest tissues we spin, and in return they give us flower-cups filled with dew; and we make good use of these, for nothing is lost with us—everything is turned to some useful purpose."

Talking thus, they arrived at a big vaulted chamber, bigger than any the children had been in before, where such a tremendous noise was

going on, it made them feel quite dizzy. It was as if a hundred thousand forges were smoking and glowing and puffing and panting and roaring at the same time; whichever way one looked, bars of red-hot iron were being hammered, but chiefly by invisible hands, whilst the Little People only stood by, giving orders. The children looked on whilst the most beautiful objects were being made from the wrought iron—and so quickly one could hardly follow with one's eyes what was being done. Hannes was enraptured; he did not want to move from the spot; he insisted he must become a smith, so that he might make just such lovely things.

Mushroommite saw what he was thinking just as he had guessed Fritzchen's thoughts, but this time he made no remark; he only explained to the children that the mountains inside which the Little People have their furnaces and forges are called by human beings burning mountains and volcanoes. And because men cannot look down into these and see what is going on, they do not know that the lava is nothing but the refuse—the dross from their workshops, out of which nothing can be made.

"But it happens very rarely," he continued, "that even this is thrown away. Many immense subterranean buildings, larger and more elabo-

rately decorated than any above ground, are constructed entirely out of dross from our metal works. Our buildings prop and sustain the mountains, which might otherwise slip and tumble in. But now we must tear ourselves away from here; and see, there is our chief upholsterer, called Featherfloss, coming this way. He will take you to the little rooms prepared for you, for we have decided, dear children, to keep you with us and teach you all we can here. And when you have learned all you require, then you may go back to the upper world and found a little village for yourselves, where every one must be as industrious and prosperous, and it is to be hoped consequently contented, as we are.

So saying, Mushroommite handed the children over to their new friend, who had a kind, funny little face, and who told them, smiling, that while they were sleeping outside in the snow he had made ready some pretty little rooms for them where they would sleep much better still. And he went on smiling as he pushed open a little door in the rock, and then another, saying: "Here is the little girl's bedroom, and here is that for the little boys!"

And what dear little rooms they were! Lieschen peeped into hers and saw the prettiest little bed, with soft white blankets and a down quilt,

warmer and lighter still, spread over it. A little lamp hung on the wall, that would go out of its own accord, Featherfloss told her, as soon as she was asleep, and would light itself again in the morning to wake her. There was also a bath sunk into the ground, all bright and shining, and full of clear, sparkling water, and a bureau in the wall in which to keep her clothes, and a little stool to sit upon, and the dearest little work-table fitted up with everything she could possibly want. The boys had a nice little room also, but there was no bath in it—they would have to go and bathe outside where the Little People took their bath.

By this time the children were so tired with all they had seen and done that day, they were glad to get into the pretty little beds, and very soon they were all three fast asleep. That was a good, sound sleep, and when they woke from it next morning they were ready and anxious to set to work. So the Little People took them with them—Hannes to the forge, that he might learn to become a smith, and Fritzchen among the miners, whilst Lieschen went with the weavers to be taught their craft. At first they were all three very awkward, but their friends were very patient with them, and only laughed good-humoredly at their mistakes, and showed them over and

over again what they had to do. But Fritzchen very soon tired of the work he had been set to. It did not seem to him at all amusing to spend his time among the coals. He had quite different ideas in his head when he talked of being a miner, and he was rather sorry now that he had mentioned it at all. Again his thoughts ran back to the precious stones he had seen, and he began to wonder if he could not find the way to them, and fill his pockets and then make his escape. He finally slipped away and set out and did find out part of the way that Mushroommite had taken them, but whilst he was groping along trying to find the opening in the rock he suddenly felt something jump on his back—something that clung fast to him with both legs, while both arms belabored him so soundly the boy did not know which way to turn to escape the blows. He ran as hard as he could, but could not shake off his invisible tormentor, who continued to rain down blows upon him, and who did not stop until apparently his own arms were tired out.

Fritzchen was not only quite stiff with the thorough beating he had had, but also so ashamed he hardly had courage to look about and see where he was, for he thought that all the Little People must know that he had been caught in the attempt to carry off their jewels.



Clung fast to him, while both arms belabored him soundly.

Whilst he was wondering where he could hide himself, good little Mushroommite came by, looked at the boy very compassionately, and without more ado picked him up and carried him off on his back. At first Fritz was rather afraid as to what might be intended towards him, but his kind little friend only took him and plunged him into a hot bath, which soon took all the pain and stiffness out of his aching limbs. Fritzchen was at first not only ashamed but angry, and tried hard to find out the name of the dwarf who had administered such a correction to him. But Mushroommite checked him, saying: "The same thing would have befallen you, my boy, whichever of us had happened to catch you on such an errand. However kindly disposed we may be, there are certain things about which we will stand no nonsense, and you may think yourself lucky that it has gone no worse with you. We saw that you were on the way to yield to an ugly temptation, so we stopped you in time, and have given you something to remember it by. Now go back to your coal mine —it was what you chose for yourself—and learn all that there is to be learned there. Later on we will find something more interesting for you to learn."

"I should like to see the daylight and the sun," said Fritz somewhat pitifully, for he felt

rather small. The other children had the same wish, too, so their kind little friend took them all three with him the very next time he went up into the woods to gather mushrooms. It certainly was delightful to be in the fresh air and the daylight once more, and to see the green trees, but the children were quite content to go down inside the mountain again. They were so well cared for there, and they could learn so much.

Time passed so rapidly the children were quite unconscious of it themselves. The two boys had grown up into tall, slight youths, active and skilful; they had learned weaving, and tailoring, and carriage-building, and cabinet-making, and carpentry, and all sorts of useful things. They could turn their hands to almost anything and were quite fit to become the first settlers in some new country and lay the foundations of its future industries.

It suddenly occurred to Hannes one day how beautiful Lieschen had become. He had never thought about it before, and now he could not help seeing that she had grown into a pretty, slender girl, with eyes as blue as a mountain lake, and a forehead of dazzling whiteness, shaded by golden-brown hair, that was so thick and long it almost covered her when she let it down. Her mouth was like a rosebud, and when she laughed

she showed two rows of little pearls. When Hannes looked at her, it seemed to him he must have been blind till now, and he sighed deeply.

"What are you sighing for, young man," said a familiar voice in his ear.

"I hardly know," stammered Hannes, and then he sighed again. "How beautiful Lieschen is!"

"She is, indeed, but that is nothing to sigh about."

"But I want her to be my wife, and I do not know whether I have the right to ask her, or whether she will listen to me."

"Ask her, and see; and if she will have you, then get married at once—we will look to the rest."

Hannes could find no suitable words of thankfulness, but his big, childlike eyes, overflowing with happiness, spoke for him. Now he must speak to Lieschen, which was no easy matter. Though they had always been together, just like brother and sister, he now suddenly began to feel shy and timid with her. But he did manage to ask if she would go for a walk in the forest with him, and they set off together, climbing up little winding paths till they were outside the mountain in the open air.

The birds were singing in the branches, and

the sunlight stole through the leaves and played over the glossy braids of Lieschen's fair hair. She was as pink and white as an apple-blossom, for she had never been sunburnt. Hannes looked at her, but he could not find anything to say, and so the two walked along in silence for some time.

"Lieschen!" he said at last; and then he stopped again, for he could find no more words.

"Hannes," was all she said, but she looked at him so kindly that he grew bolder and took her in his arms and asked her: "Will you be my wife, Lieschen?"

"With all my heart!" she answered softly, and it was with all her heart she looked into his eyes.

And so hand in hand they went back to their friends, who rejoiced with them, for they had long guessed their secret—long before the young people had known it themselves. But now for the first time it seemed to the two as if there were no space for them to breathe freely in underground. They pined for fresh air and liberty, but did not like to say so lest they should seem ungrateful. But the Little People had again seen what they thought and felt. "Children," they said, "you have stayed here long enough, and learned all you can from us. Now go back into the world, and make a home for yourselves. We will help you



"With all my heart," she answered, softly.

to do it. You will feel that you always have us with you for your friends."

The young people were touched by so much kindness, and thanked their friends with tears in their eyes. But they did not think they ought to go away like this, as soon as they had become good workers, but ought rather to stay and show their gratitude.

"There is no need to speak of gratitude," said their little friends; "we know that you are grateful. Nor do we require that you should stay here to work for us. Go out into the world and teach others what you have learned from us, and we shall be rewarded."

One person did not look as happy as the rest; and that was Fritz. He had become a first-rate workman, as steady as he was skilful, but since the other two were engaged to be married, he had grown gloomy and depressed. He scarcely spoke, and avoided even looking at Lieschen, and when the Little People offered him his liberty together with the others, he refused with thanks, assuring them that he preferred to remain in the mountain, as all the friends he had were there."

The dwarfs exchanged glances. Fritz's love for Lieschen had not passed unperceived by them, but they had always feigned to ignore it. They thanked him now for his good feeling in wishing

to remain with them, but told him they were sure that he, too, in time would leave them. "After all, the people of earth, and not the Little People, are your own kith and kin, and you cannot live without them forever, any more than you could forever live without fresh air and sunshine, forests and green fields."

But he only shrugged his shoulders and went his way.

Very soon after this Hannes and Lieschen stood together before the altar, and as they left the church one of the little friends stood in the path, and told them he was there to conduct them to their new home. It was the prettiest little house he led them to, built of stone, on the very mountain slope beneath which they had lived and worked so long.

"This is to be your home, which you must arrange after your own taste. We look upon you as our own children, and wish you to be settled quite near us. You will find here all the best of your own work; your spinning and weaving, Lieschen; and many useful things turned out by Hannes in his forge—we have kept them all for you, to start your housekeeping. But these pretty chairs and this table are the wedding present Fritz makes you, he has made them himself, to furnish your house."

It was hard work parting with the little friends, to whom they owed all their happiness. But the young couple promised to pay them a visit very soon, so that was something to look forward to. Only one thing grieved the happy pair—Fritz never came to see them. Hannes was much surprised at this, but Lieschen guessed what it meant. One day they learned from Mushroommite that Fritz had gone. He had soon found it unbearable down below, without his two human companions. He had gone off into the wide world to make his fortune, as he said, for it seemed as if something of the old thirst for gold, which had shown itself in him in childhood, had awakened again. He had started for the gold-fields, and he thought he had a better chance than others of finding gold, since he knew so much better than most what it looks like inside the earth. It was a pity, the dwarf thought, that he could not overcome the longing for riches, but he would perhaps turn his wealth to good account, if ever he had it, for he was so clever, and good-hearted, too.

The little friend was right. In a very few years Fritz came back with a pretty young wife, who could speak nothing but English, and settled down among his old companions. And now a busy time began upon the mountain slope. One

after the other, factories and workshops sprang up, and good dwelling-houses, so that the village soon became a town, in which all industries and mechanical arts were cultivated with so much success that the Little People were enchanted, and rubbed their hands for joy, saying: "That is really a good work we have done this time! Let us begin again!"

But all children are not so teachable as the first three, and some gave so much trouble the Little People have now-a-days quite given up adopting any. They think that human beings must now be satisfied with what has already been done for them, and they do not try to repeat the experiment that was once so successful, as they are aware things seldom turn out so well a second time. And then so much happens in the world above to shock and horrify them that they think they would rather keep inside their mountains in future. There it is always peaceful and happy, and they shake their wise little heads over the dreadful things the poor sun must shine upon!

Their adopted children grew old and gray, whilst no change passed over the Little People. But the human beings, as they advanced in age, had their children and their children's children to take their place. Most of those who are now living have forgotten from whom their good for-

tune first came. But the Little People have not forgotten them, and very often these children find their work done for them, and wonder who can have helped them, and then the Great-grandfather tells them of the mountain and of its inhabitants, and says with a smile: "Who knows if the Little People have not come to look after you?"

But modern children think they know everything; there are no secrets for them, and as their schoolmaster has never told them that there are people living inside the mountains, they do not believe it. But the Great-grandfather smiles to himself, for he knows much better.

THE STORY OF A HELPFUL QUEEN*

Once upon a time there lived a good Queen. She would fain have assuaged all the suffering she saw on earth, but the more good she did, the more distress seemed to increase. Her means were inadequate to help the poor, her words proved unequal to the task of freeing those in sorrow from their grief, and her hands were unable to bring healing to the sick. Then the thought occurred to her that it must be impossible that God should have intended the world to be so full of misery; she felt that mankind was destined to be happy, if only it knew how.

One day she entered a church and prayed to God with an intensity the full strength of which she was unable to realize at the time. She prayed —as many other foolish mortals pray, who do not know what it would mean to them if their prayers were granted—she prayed: "Oh, Lord! let me be able to bring happiness to those that suffer, even if I must take their burden upon

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myself." She left the church with an anxious heart, wondering whether God had heard her prayer; for sometimes God does not seem to hear us when we pray. But on the very same day it was made clear to her that her prayer had been heard.

She met a boy being wheeled in his sick chair, who had never been able to walk a step in his life. She had known him for long, and he loved the good Queen with all the strength of his soul. As was her habit, she went up to him, took his thin hand in hers, and spoke to him in her melodious voice of his early recovery. The boy's eyes seemed to grow larger as she spoke. She felt as if his glance drew all the strength from within her; she was suddenly overtaken by a sense of fatigue such as she had never known before. And, all at once, the boy rose up straight from his couch and said, as if in a dream: "I think I can walk." Then he got on his feet and stepped out as though he had never been lame in his life. The Queen smiled sadly at the sight of his gladness. She went home and lay many weeks in bed suffering from lameness. Her limbs were as though they had perished. Still, she declined the help of the doctor, and said that in due time God would take her suffering from her. And so it was. Henceforth she suffered from one illness

after the other; she became blind, deaf, mute, and fell into high fever; but only to emerge younger and more beautiful—glorified, as it were, by every trial through which she passed. Nobody ever heard her utter a word of complaint. Her miraculous powers for healing the sick became known far and wide, although she never spoke of them, and people thronged around her and besought her to relieve their sufferings, without having an idea of the sacrifice it involved for her. It was only rumored that the Queen exposed herself to all kinds of infection, and would take no precautions against them, particularly where children were concerned. Her poverty soon became equal to her other trials.

She was ingenious in procuring work for others, but she herself had long since had nothing left to give. She was forced to begrudge herself the smallest luxury, for she was bereft of every means for procuring it. And although her devoted husband often assisted her from his own, yet she fell at last into the same plight as Saint Elizabeth of old—she had scarcely a gown left to cover her. And still her name was blessed a thousand times. People came to her from far and near. They tried to grasp her hand, to catch a glance from her eyes, the splendid radiance of which soothed all those who looked into them.

She spread an atmosphere of peace and happiness around her, and even those gained joyful contentment who had been most ungodly. Nobody could resist the placid influence which emanated from her person.

But what was harder to bear than all were the dark hours of misconception, when she had been the means of fostering peace and was only requited by the slander of evil tongues in her own home. This almost made her forget that it was all part and parcel of the blessings which her miraculous gift had vouchsafed her.

She wept in silence. But soon the clouds lifted again and she realized that she was ordained to take the spiritual sufferings of others upon herself. From that moment her patience became inexhaustible. And people forgot that they had ill-treated her, and fancied that they had always venerated her, and never misunderstood or maligned her. She smiled sadly as she thought of all this in her solitude. One glance from her had enabled them to forget the past.

It was a remarkable experience to her to have to suffer the pangs of repentance of a guilty conscience, as if she herself had committed some great crime. This was the result of bringing back to the right road one who had fallen away under great temptation. This was, indeed, hard

to bear; for she knew herself to be free from guilt or blame, and yet her poor heart beat day and night in mortal anguish. At times she was conscious that this could only be a transitory state of mind of hers, like all the others she had passed through; but her sufferings were great, indeed.

One day she was visited by a poor woman. "Oh, dear, gracious queen," she cried, "my only son is dying! And I know that you possess miraculous herbs which can effect a cure in cases where no mortal can afford help!"

Without hesitation the Queen hurried to the bedside of the gasping youth. He opened his eyes, which were already nearly closed, and looked at the Queen; and that one glance rekindled the dying flame of life. Breath returned to him; the pallid, cold lips grew red and warm, and the grateful mother sank down before the Queen, embracing her feet, and then fondling her son who was saved.

On her return home the Queen did not feel so weary as usual, and yet she fully expected to be struck down by a severe illness, if not, indeed, by death. But what was her agony when, the very next day, her only child fell seriously ill and appeared to be hurrying towards certain death. "O Lord! O Lord!" she cried, "do not ask this sacrifice of me, for it is beyond my strength."



The grateful mother sank down before the Queen, embracing her feet.

But her supplications were in vain. In vain was her experienced nursing. The glance of her eyes had lost its power here. The child did not look up again, and only murmured at times of beautiful angels and flowers, until at last it lay pale and cold in her arms—and she a broken woman, bereft of tears, without strength to utter a moan, utterly consumed with grief. Henceforth her miraculous power seemed to have deserted her.

People said she had lost faith in her mysterious herbs. Dark days, indeed, were in store for the poor Queen. She cursed herself and her prayers. She said to herself that it was her fault that the husband she adored was now as unhappy as she was herself. The world seemed to her to be dark indeed. She only saw night around her; no sunrise, no lovely trees, and no heavenly justice; naught of all that which in other days had gladdened her heart. She who had never complained before, so long as she thought she could relieve others from their suffering, now thought heaven to be cruel, and she no longer possessed the strength to rejoice with the mother whose child she had saved from impending death. For the first time for many a day, during which she had been ceaselessly racked by anguish and doubt, she fell asleep.

And it seemed to her that the door opened,

and her child came towards her, happy and radiant. He sat down by her bedside and took her hand, and the dull heaviness of pain was lifted from her heart. He breathed with a breath as of violets, and joy possessed her. He spoke to her with the voice of a clear and resonant bell.

"Mother, weep not! You have given me a greater happiness than is known on earth—even through the sublimity of love; for you have opened up the heavens to me, and I have been permitted to return there without pain and sorrow—thanks to your self-sacrifice. Mother, weep not! I am ever near you. You were guilty of a pious error when you undertook to banish all suffering from the world, and this error you had to atone for in sorrow and ashes. For the world is exactly as God ordains that it should be—a mine, a furnace, a crucible—a brief passage from one existence unto another, which is higher or meaner, in accordance with the life we have practiced on earth. Be patient, mother—your hour of release is near, and I am always by your side, with all my fervor and strength. You can still console others, because you believe in the world to come—yes, because you know for certain that it awaits us all. There is no such thing as death! There is only a re-birth. And if, O mother! you only knew how beautiful it is, you would

await it radiant with joy, and never sigh again! It is necessary that poverty, sickness, injustice, and war should exist; for these are means of purification, of mutual help and mercy. Therefore are all those blessed who help them that suffer with all their strength, with all self-sacrifice staking all they have to give. But they cannot make this world a paradise; that is not permitted to them. For the world is, indeed, a laboratory, which, according to worldly conceits, we call hell or purgatory."

Here the Queen awoke, and from that hour peace entered into her soul. She was able to do good, to console and to give pleasure to others, but no longer to cure them! And she no longer asked for power to do these things, for she was quiet and content, and peace reigned around her.

HANS' ADVENTURE WITH THE SHADOWS

"Mother, where do all the shadows go to at night, when there is no more sun? They must stay somewhere, the poor shadows; they cannot be quite dead and come to life again every day."

"The shadows have all gone into the one big shadow which night makes."

But that the little fellow would not believe, for the shadows all seemed to him so real, he could not think of them otherwise than as having their own life, and own thoughts, and particular purposes.

"Do they go to sleep?" he went on questioning.

"Yes, they sleep, and you must go to sleep, too," replied his mother.

But he could not fall asleep so easily, for it seemed to him as if shadows gathered round and beckoned to him—dark and light shadows, pretty ones and ugly ones—talking and laughing, and crying, just as if they were alive. So he sat up



Shadows gathered round and beckoned to him.

in his little bed and asked them why they were not asleep. His mother thought they slept, but then his mother certainly never paid so much attention to them as he did; he always watched, and saw how slowly and unwillingly they took their leave, trying to stop a little at the last minute, and drawing themselves out quite long, so as to make it all the more difficult to take them away.

"And why are you then always taken away, just when I want to play a little longer with you?" he asked, turning towards them as if they were old acquaintances.

"Are we then never to be allowed to rest?" asked a shadow.

"Rest? But you do not run about, and you have no lessons to learn!"

"And have you never noticed that everything you do we have to do it too, whether we like it or no?"

"But you have no weight at all, so you can never be tired."

"We are tired, just because we can never do what we like, but must always follow some one else."

"Besides," said another shadow, "we always have to suffer if our masters are not good, or if they are ill, or have any grief themselves, or if

they simply neglect to take us out into the sun to get back our strength. If we are long, we shadows, without seeing the sun, we grow so weak we feel as if we should die."

"Where is my poor shadow?" cried Hans in consternation. "I would not go out at all to-day, although my mother wished it."

"Your shadow is so weak it cannot speak a word."

"And the other day when I was just stretching out my hand to take that apple I saw quite distinctly how the shadow shook its fist at me."

"Of course it did to warn you that the apple was not meant for you. And then the time you lifted your hand to strike your little sister, did you see what your shadow did?"

"It lifted up its hand to give me a blow!"

"Yes, and when it felt it was not strong enough, how vexed it was. You do not realize that you often hurt your best friend, and that he is punished when you have done wrong, and then at night he wrings his hands and tries to give you good advice in your dreams, but his voice is so low you do not even hear him when you have been romping and making so much noise all day long. You do not seem to remember that your shadow is obliged to take part in all your foolish pranks, and then afterwards it must pay for them

by having no share of the pleasures provided for us at night when we have done our duty watching, and warning, and consoling, and helping to make the world more beautiful. Think what the world would be without us! What would a mountain look like that cast no shade? And who would care to sit under a shadowless tree? The smallest flower has its own pretty little shadow, as neat and clearly outlined as a pencil sketch, in which the beetles can walk up and down. Only think how frightfully hot the world would be if there were no more shade. Neither human beings nor animals could bear it very long."

"But," said Hans, "does it not hurt you, then, to grow so small at midday?"

"Indeed it does; that is the dreadful time for us, for then we always think the sun is going to kill us, and we are so frightened we begin to shiver and shake, and shrink and shrivel, and the sun pursues us unpityingly, and scolds and threatens us: 'You foolish little shadows! You cannot escape me—I shall swallow you all!'"

"That is why people must rest at midday, when they have worked the whole morning, to let the shadows recover from the shock?"

"Exactly so; and we are so grateful to them when they lie down and we can hide ourselves under them, where the sun cannot reach us."

"But the evening is a good time for you, for you are all larger than life-size. And at night the whole world belongs to you."

"True we are beautiful in the evening, are we not? We are so glad to think that night is coming, and we only wish it could be much, much longer."

"What do you do, then, at night?"

"Shall we take you with us for once? But you must be very quiet, for shadows are not very robust, and are apt to take fright at the least sound. And if you make any noise they will fancy it is already day-break, and will be setting to work too early."

And Hans felt suddenly as if his eyes were opened so that he could see in the darkness, like an owl or cat. He seemed to feel himself grow lighter, too, as though he could fly, and the shadows took him with them, to dance and be merry with them. It was such fun, he felt inclined to shout for joy, but a hand was placed before his mouth, and a soft voice whispered: "Hush! Hush! No noise!" It seemed to him the strangest thing of all, that one should be quiet, and yet enjoy one's self.

It was bright moonlight, and the shadows, instead of sleeping, had met to hold their revels on the grass. They looked like great lovely night-

moths, as they danced their strange fantastic rounds. And Hans danced with them, and felt himself grow lighter every minute, as they drew him along, right up through the topmost branches of the trees, and higher still into the clouds themselves—then down again to alight in some beautiful meadow full of flowers. There they would rouse the sleeping butterflies till these bestirred themselves and whirled along with them, or sip the dewdrops they shook off the flowers, and Hans sipped with them.

"We have nothing to drink the whole day long," they explained, "and by night we are so thirsty we are glad to refresh ourselves with the delicious dew."

How lightly they skimmed over the slumbering blossoms, absorbing their perfume, which seemed to envelop them in redolent clouds as they floated away—themselves like flowers of night, filling the midnight air with sweetness. Once Hans stretched his hand out to grasp a flower, as he thought, but it was only a flower shadow flying along with the others. The shadows float through every obstacle; nothing can stop them—but on account of Hans they were obliged to go somewhat slower and more cautiously than usual. Their little guest, in fact, gave them no small amount of trouble, since he had so much

"But can I do nothing at all to make things pleasanter for my poor shadow?"

"You can do very much; it lies with you whether your shadow is to be as merry at night as you have been all day, or whether it is to have no pleasure at all."

Hans was quite grave for a few minutes, for he was really fond of his shadow that was such a faithful companion, and took part in all his games, and knew all his thoughts. The farther they went the better he understood to what an extent our shadows have to do and think as we do. They came upon one shadow who was struggling to carry a heavy load.

"Look, Hanschen, how that poor shadow toils to lift that weight, because its master is a miser, and never rests, day or night, from adding to his hoard. Now the shadow knows where there are riches to be found, and as its master cares for nothing else it thinks that it must help him, and so it comes at night to try to carry them off for him.

"But that is dreadful," said Hans, and he became quite thoughtful.

The moon shone in through a window where they saw a shadow hard at work sewing.

"What is it working at?" asked Hans.

"In that room lives a very poor girl who has her sick mother to keep, and when she is so tired she cannot work any longer her shadow goes on working for her to help her. Then in the morning when she comes to work quite early she finds some of it done and fancies that she must be dreaming still, or that she has gone on working in her sleep, and she is surprised not to feel more tired."

"But do the shadows never sleep?"

"They never require sleep—they have no bodies that must be rested. But look in at that other window. There sits a poor student, a young man who reads and writes till far into the night, and sometimes the whole night through. And then his shadow comes very quietly, and places itself before that lamp, so that he fancies it is going out, and his eyes close, and the shadow takes his place and works till dawn. But just before daybreak the shadow goes out into the open air, and jumps and runs with the others to refresh itself for the whole day, and the young student is refreshed, too, and wonders to find his brain so much clearer to continue his work. And when good children put their book under their pillow, so that they may know their lesson well in the morning, then the shadow comes and

sits upon the bed beside them, and reads the passage over and over again, till there can be no doubt about its meaning."

"Our shadows really love us then?"

"Indeed they do; they are such good friends to us we must be very careful to do nothing that can hurt them."

Next they saw the shadow of a little girl searching for something and looking so distressed.

"It is looking for a penny which the little girl dropped yesterday, and if it can but find it it will lead her in the morning to the spot. There are not too many pence in that house, and the poor child cannot sleep for thinking of it, for unless this one is found it will mean so much less bread for all. But look, do you see what the shadow is doing now?"

Just then the shadow stopped and looked under a tuft of grass, where it spied the small coin lying. Then it pushed the blades of grass again a little on one side to mark the spot.

"Will the little girl see that in the morning?" asked Hans, anxiously.

"She will be sure to see it, for she goes about with her eyes fixed on the ground hunting everywhere for what she has lost. So her attention will be drawn to the spot, and the good shadow will again have proved itself a true friend."

Farther on there was a poor little shadow, all in rags, crying as if its heart would break.

"Why do you cry so, you poor little shadow?" asked Hans in great concern.

"Oh, Oh! They have put my little master in prison for stealing."

"For stealing?" said Hans. "But that is very bad to steal, and of course one goes to prison for it. Why did you not tell him it was wrong?"

"About that he knows nothing—about right and wrong. He lives with people who have taken great pains to teach him to pick pockets. They did not want me to see it—they always told him to beware of me—that I should some day betray him! I, his own shadow, who loves him so! And yet, it is true—I have betrayed him!"

"You have betrayed him? How, then?"

"I always have to do everything that he does, and he was not careful, and just as he was taking a purse out of a stranger's pocket I had to do the same, and the man saw me on the wall, and turned and took him by the collar, and marched him off to the police station! And he is so hungry—so dreadfully hungry! They would not give him anything to eat because he had brought nothing home for so long. And now they have locked him up, all alone in the dark, where I cannot even go in to comfort him! When he was hungry we

always played together—and then he forgot his hunger. But now it is so dark—I cannot go to him! And there he sits, and is so unhappy, and thinks that I betrayed him! For the old gentleman told the policeman he saw the shadow putting its hand into his pocket. Oh, what can I do? My poor, poor, little master!"

At that moment Hans felt his mother's shadow pass a hand gently over his hair, and he seemed to know what he ought to say.

"Tell me where I can find your little master, and I promise you you shall both be taken in, first in my own house, then in another good house I know of where you will be taken care of and kindly treated. Trust me and do not cry any longer, for first thing in the morning we will go to the prison and fetch your little master out!"

"Ah, no! I am sure you will forget all about us."

"No, for I have a good, kind mother, whose shadow is with me now, and when I wake in the morning it will at once remind me of all that has happened this night, and we will both make haste to help you."

And onward the shadows led Hans in their midnight wandering through the beautiful wide world, and he saw everything as clearly as in the daylight—so keen had his sight become. Out of

the flowercups new shadows poured every moment and began to dance and play with the shadows of pretty little children. Hans was delighted to recognize among these the shadows of his elder brother and little sisters playing together so nicely. But all at once they began to quarrel and dispute—all struggling to get possession of a moonbeam, which the smallest girl held in her hand.

"We want to shine like that!" cried the others, and tore it away from her.

Hans felt the serious, inquiring glance of his mother's shadow bent upon him. He grew very red.

"Yes, it is quite true," he said. "We did quarrel to-day and we were very cross and disagreeable—and at last we fought."

"Now look and see what the shadows are doing."

They were fighting together; they tore at one another, till the big shadows stepped in between them and separated them and ordered them off to bed.

"Away, you naughty little shadows, we cannot have you spoil sports here. Go home and tell those you belong to, in their sleep, how you are punished for their bad behavior during the day. Away! you wretched little shadows!"

And so saying the big shadow blew upon them and they were gone, like a puff of wind, nothing more was to be seen of them; they would not even be able to put themselves together again, until the children should go out into the morning sunshine.

Hans had again grown very serious, but some dear little shadows came and took him by the hand, saying: "We know you are fond of animals. Come and have a ride upon a deer." His face beamed.

"But am I not too heavy?"

"This night you are not so much heavier than ourselves. You shall see how the deer will fly along with you—and we shall come, too, riding on other deer, and hares, and owls, and bats, and moths—on everything that runs or flies by night. All serve to bear us in our flight to the lovely mountains where our chief revels take place."

So Hans swung himself on the back of a lovely little deer, and the others did as they had said, and away they flew through the silent summer's night. What a ride it was! Fireflies flew along beside them to light them on their way; lily bells rang their silver chimes, while all the other bell-flowers sounded their deeper notes in the far distance; and the bumble-bees awoke, too, and hummed and buzzed in gentle chorus. This time

Hans could hardly restrain himself from giving a shout of wild delight, but his mother's shadow, riding by his side on a splendid stag, placed a finger on his lip and stopped him in time, for that would have spoiled everything, and all the shadows would have vanished into air.

Flying along with the swiftness of the winds they reached the top of a high mountain, where the stars seemed so near that one could take hold of them. The moon was just setting, and it made such a funny, smiling face that Hans was very much inclined to burst out laughing, but he felt something soft and gentle on his lips, shutting them, and when he looked up it was a squirrel that had sprung down from a tree right on his shoulder, and was holding one little paw before his mouth to prevent him from startling the shadows. And a little screech owl came and stroked his forehead and eyes with its wings, saying: "Feel how soft I am!" And Hans certainly thought it was the softest, lightest touch he had ever felt in all his life. The little owl went on staring at him with its big round eyes, that shone like two little lamps, lighting up everything near. Altogether it was far more strange and wonderful since the moon had gone down, for now the only light came from the glow-worms, and the fireflies, and the owls' eyes, or the eyes of the wildcats,

who had also come to join the assembly. Hans kept his seat quietly, resting his head at times between the great, soft ears of the good deer, whilst he looked on at the shadow-dance winding in and out among the flowers. The shadows floated over cyclamen and alpine roses, they leaned among the edelweiss as though upon downy cushions, they sipped dew out of the gentian cups, and were as full of mirth and glee as if they had drunk strong wine—for the gentian is a fiery flower, and the dew in its calyx becomes quite hotly spiced.

In all the valleys 'round crickets and grasshoppers played their little guitars and castagnettes, and further away, deep down in the marshes, the frogs croaked, and the toads, hidden quite out of sight, sounded their tiny bells.

The whole night long the musicians never tired of playing, and Hans felt happier than ever in his life before—it seemed to him as if he were in a little kingdom of his own, where everyone was trying to do something or other for his special pleasure. He did not know what to say to it all, and at last, from sheer happiness, he fell asleep.

What happened to him then—how the deer carried him so carefully down the mountain, how his mother's shadow took him gently in her arms and laid him in his bed—of all that Hans knew



Hans kept his seat quietly, resting his head at times between the great soft ears of the good deer.



nothing, for he slept soundly, and when he awoke very late next morning he was not so sure that it had not all been a dream, especially when he found that his mother remembered nothing either of the beautiful or sad things that had happened, although he reminded her of them. This made him very sad.

"We will see, though," he suddenly exclaimed, "if it was true or only a dream! Let us go to the prison, and if we find the boy there, and I know him again—then it was all true, and we can save the poor boy from the gang of thieves, and make him good and happy."

His heart beat fast as he walked by his mother's side to the prison, and in answer to her question what were they going for, he could only say, "To take the boy away."

And there they found him, the poor boy, pale and thin and ragged; and a tiny sunbeam that just then crept in through the one small narrow window showed the shadow, too, whom Hans recognized at once. After this he could not rest until the boy was set at liberty, and they could take him home and give him food and clothes. And then they placed him with good, hard-working folk, who treated him kindly and taught him an honest trade, so that he might hold his head up in the world.

As for Hans himself, whenever his brothers and sisters were inclined to quarrel, he would call out: "Stop! Stop! You do not know how you will grieve the shadows!" And that always astonished them so much that he had to tell them, over and over again, the wonderful story of his night spent among the shadows.

THE SWAN LAKE

It was a beautiful house—with a big flower-garden in front of it, and trees and meadows far as the eye could reach, and behind it a park many hundreds of years old, through which flowed a clear, broad stream forming a magnificent pond, into which the trees dipped their branches dreamily, while pretty little boats seemed only to wait for rowers, and the loveliest black and white swans swam over it in all directions.

Roses and vines covered the walls in luxuriant growth, and the grapes began to ripen as the roses left off blossoming, so that all the forest-dwellers benefited in turn, for the nightingales had permission to build their nests among the roses, and the other birds might peck as many grapes as they pleased, for there were always plenty there. The windows all opened like doors, some on to the flower-garden, some out into the park and adjoining wood, and as the house belonged to a very good Fairy, from whom none had ever experienced anything but kindness, there was no danger that thieves would ever break in. There the good

Fairy's favorite children lived, those who had learned from her only to do good, and whom she allowed to play with her swans. And that was a much greater privilege than might at first be thought. One is indeed generally glad enough to feed swans, and to see them coming gliding so tranquilly over the smooth surface of the water, with their unruffled plumage and graceful, proud, majestic motion. But the swans of the Swanmere of the good Fairy Swanhilde were different from all others. At first the children did not understand at all what they meant when they turned their backs and spread out their wings again and again, as if inviting the children to mount them.

At last one little girl said, "Shall I try? And if the swan lets me fall into the water then some of you must pull me out quickly. But I do not think it can mean any harm—it looks so kind, I shall get on its back."

And sure enough, the swan took her on its back, and began to swim about with her round and round the lake, so that the child was overjoyed and clapped her little hands with delight. Of course, the other children at once wanted to do the same, and they called the swans, who came trooping along in greater numbers than one would have ever thought possible, so that there was one for each child to mount, and away they sailed with



There was one for each child to mount, and away they sailed.

the lake widening before them, till it seemed as if there were no shores to it, except the one they left behind them close to the house. Then suddenly it grew narrower, and the trees on each side larger and larger each moment, and sometimes their roots stretched across from one bank to the other, so that the swans had to pass right under them with the children, and this they did with the same imperturbable calm, as if it were the most natural thing in the world. At last the lake seemed really shoreless—nothing but a vast expanse of water dotted with innumerable lovely islets, richly wooded, and covered with strange, rare flowers whose gorgeous hues, reflected in the transparent waves, made them shine and glow as if full of sapphires and rubies. The children asked to land at one of these islands, and at once the swans turned obediently towards the nearest, and very timidly but with irrepressible curiosity they stepped on shore. What a magnificent sight met their eyes! The flowers were much taller than themselves; they would have liked to gather one here and there, but when they stretched their hands out towards a blossom it drew back and would not let itself be gathered. And there were pretty little arbors made of foliage and moss, in which chairs and tables seemed to stand prepared for the small guests. In every ar-

bor on the one side hung invitingly ripe, delicious fruit, which one had only to pluck to satisfy both hunger and thirst, and a library filled the other three sides. Many of the children were in no hurry to take down the books—this was holiday time—and they had books the whole year round. But there were others who did want to see what these volumes contained. How astonished they were to find as they turned the pages that all the events and scenes described actually took place before their eyes. They read of the desert—and in a moment they were there, surrounded by the burning sand. They saw the caravans pass by with the pilgrims and merchants, and the patient camels struggling along with outstretched necks to reach the nearest oasis. They were among the travelers as they dismounted and encamped and were refreshed, and the children seemed to feel with them all they felt. When lions were seen by the travelers, a little farther on, the reader heard them roar till she trembled for fear of being devoured.

Meanwhile, another child was reading of an Arctic expedition—and there were the great fields of ice and a ship wedged in fast among the icebergs, and the explorers digging their way out through the snow, and catching seals to roast and eat. It was all so near you could hear their voices

and hold your hand out to them, and share their meal, and take part in their debate as to whether they must kill and eat the good, faithful dogs that stood looking up in their faces so wistfully, as if they understood what was being discussed.

A few pages in another volume brought one to the heart of the Dark Continent, peopled by the hideous orang-outangs, the wild men of the woods.

And in India you went out tiger-shooting and realized what it was to be on the elephant's back with the tiger about to spring.

The children visited the Redskins in America, the Maoris in New Zealand, the convicts in Australia; they saw the Chinese planting rice and honoring their ancestors. They went from house to house in Japan and learnt from the Japanese to paint as beautifully as they do.

Then in another volume they drove in a sledge drawn by reindeer, and heard the Swedes singing their sweet, plaintive songs. They saw Vesuvius vomiting forth its flames and fiery lava-flood, as if once more to bury Pompeii beneath its ashes. They sailed past Stromboli, and then among the Irish fisheries. They walked through some of the old English manors, and admired the pictures on the walls, and the happy, healthy, open-air life of the

inmates. They saw in London the unlading of whole cargoes of frozen sheep sent from the antipodes to provide food for the great city. In this way they learned geography—or rather they had nothing at all to learn; they had merely to remember what they had seen on all these delightful journeys which had been accomplished without trouble or fatigue or any sort of inconvenience. They knew the countries and the greatest travelers; they climbed the mountains and swam the streams, and wandered through the towns till every street was known to them and they could find their way about as if they had lived there for years. Now and then they would look down from some great height over a vast stretch of country, with the whole region mapped out clearly before them, with all its hills and rivers, and towns and villages, down to the smallest hamlets. They could any of them have become mountain guides, so well did they know Mont Blanc and the Jungfrau, the Dhawalaghiri, the Chimborazo. They made the acquaintance of all the wild animals far better than in any zoölogical garden, for here they were at liberty and could act according to their nature; and indeed they sometimes felt a little uncomfortable and turned the page quickly if they saw a python or boa-constrictor quite near.

Then came the history lesson. Here, too, they had nothing to learn—they lived it all. They were present at the building of the Pyramids; they passed the Red Sea with the Children of Israel; they thirsted with them in the wilderness, and drank the water which flowed from the rock; they saw Moses come down from Mount Sinai, bearing the Tables of the Law, with his countenance so dazzling none might look on him. They helped to defend the pass of Thermopylæ; they fought on the plain of Marathon; they saw the messenger bearing the tidings of victory to Athens and falling dead before the altar. Then they were at Salamis in the thick of the fight, where the ships ran one another aground, and over all the figure of the great goddess Athene seemed to hover, protecting the city she loved, and bidding it come forth triumphant in the struggle against such overwhelming odds.

Another book took them to the studio, where Phidias chiseled his wondrous statues in the shining marble, and they could enter a Greek house and see the home life of the ancients, tasting their food and mixing cups of the sweet wine, or aiding the women at the loom weaving the soft, fine wool into marvelous tissues.

The whole Trojan war they lived through again, day by day and hour by hour. How

grand, but how terrible it was! It made their blood run cold to see Achilles dragging the dead body of Hector at his chariot wheels, and then the hot tears ran down their cheeks as old Priam begged, weeping, to be allowed to ransom and pay funeral honors to his valiant son.

In Rome they spent as much time as they wished. They knew what ancient Rome looked like far better than any learned men can tell us, since they saw it at all periods—in the Punic wars, with Regulus and Hannibal, with Cato, Cæsar, Nero—they called up whom one would. They witnessed the gladiatorial combats in the Coloseum; they saw Rome burning, and the Christians brought as victims into the arena.

Elsewhere they took part in the crusades, or lingered in the castles where the noble dames beguiled the time with turning the spinning-wheel, or embroidering silken attire. They sailed with Columbus for America, and saw all Montezuma's treasures, great stores of gold and silver. And all these things were seen so clearly and felt so keenly the children firmly believed that they had experienced them all.

When they were tired they let the swans carry them home again, and then slept as soundly as warriors exhausted with a hard day's fighting.

Then in their games they played at all they

had seen, so that their play was learning, and their learning play.

Perhaps the most wonderful lesson of all was the arithmetic. For there were many children there who had formerly had such difficulty with it that they thought they should never be able to understand it. But here the hardest problems suddenly became quite clear and simple, and worked themselves out, so that you could not possibly make a mistake.

In fact, on the Islands of the Swanmere only those could fail to learn who were too lazy even to open a book; but that rarely happened more than once, for they saw how happy their companions were, and how quickly the time passed for them! And as for the arithmetic, it was almost miraculous how easy it was, and with such amusing examples, too. There was no dull multiplication table, but one had two apples, three peaches, six plums, to count by! And with the higher rules it was just the same—one understood their application in a minute, and one was all impatience to know more.

At home the children amused themselves with drawing geometric figures, and cutting them out of wood, till they could soon make as beautiful carved ornaments as the Arabs. The laws of architecture, too, they mastered so thoroughly

they were able to build splendid houses all over the isles, one after the other, as fast as possible; for scarcely was one building finished than the Fairy brought new books with new designs, and there was something fresh to learn and copy. Little by little they built themselves an observatory, and the Fairy taught them all about the stars.

Yes, there was always something new, and one could never feel tired, for mirth and merry-making alternated with instruction, and one hardly knew which was which. Only one thing troubled the children—the thought that all the men and women whom they had learned to know in their books were no longer living on the earth. That made them quite sad at times, but the good Fairy comforted them by telling them they would meet them all in heaven.

With languages they naturally had no trouble at all, as they could spend what time they liked in any country. They had merely to keep their book open at the place and they were at home among the people, and of course they could speak their language as if they had talked nothing else all their life. They had no dry vocabularies to learn by heart, no themes and versions to prepare; they lived among the poets and listened to their words, just like any Greek or Roman

youth. They understood Sanskrit, and all the Hindu dialects; Spanish and Portuguese came of themselves, because they had been all through their wars; French they knew from its beginning up to the present time; English they learned from Shakespeare's dramas, played on his own stage. Then they were off to Iceland during the making of the Eddas, or they accompanied Russian exiles on the march to Siberia. In this manner they soon knew all the languages of the world.

How simple it all was. And just so with the arts.

There were immense studios and workshops of every age and country, and in these one could put one's self to school to all the great masters in the best way possible, by seeing them at work.

Of music there was no lack, and of the choicest, suited to all seasons and all moods. Did one feel melancholy, one had but to bid a swan bear one to the island given up to mournful chants and requiems. If one's mood were joyful, one could listen to the national songs of all countries and take part in them. The children could not themselves account for it that they all sang so well in chorus, but that came simply from their habit of always joining in whenever they heard beautiful singing. In this way, different choirs were formed among them, some of whom sang

like Swedish singers, some like Russian, some like Welsh. Harp-playing they learned from the old bards, and composed their own songs, words, and music, as they sang, and in this manner many a one became unconsciously a poet. Nothing was forced; everything came spontaneously. None ever felt themselves obliged to attempt things which gave them no pleasure, and so everything became a pleasure, and the only vexation was that one had not time for all one could have wished. The architect could sing, and the mathematician play the violin. Others began to write new books of events yet unchronicled, which they themselves had witnessed, or of the strange, sweet songs they had joined in singing which had never yet been noted down.

The journey home was all rest and repose. It was so delicious after all the life, and work, and movement, and varied interests of the day, to let one's self glide along on the gentle swan's back, and think over all that had taken place, so that one might be sure not to forget it. Of course, there were no lessons to prepare, for there was no one to give them or correct them. Each child learned of his own accord those things for which he felt himself disposed, and then they all talked about them together. At times they gathered 'round the Fairy, and she questioned them with

smiles on this and that, trying to find out what pleased them best. Many were encouraged to open books which had not at first attracted them, so that they might not find themselves left out when those subjects were being discussed. And no one would have liked to appear quite ignorant very long, since the other children did not care to talk to those who never opened a book. Some would take their palette and brushes and go straight to nature to try and paint some of the lovely scenes they saw, like the great artists whom they had watched so often.

Natural history they learned, without pulling the poor flowers to pieces or sticking pins in butterflies, or torturing any other animals. They had at their disposal rays much stronger than the Roentgen rays, to enable them to see how the sap circulates in plants and the blood in animals. What a delight it was to observe the delicate fluid course through the pink veins of the rose-leaf! Instead of cold, dead pictures, it was real warm life their books showed them, and how could one forget such lessons? One could watch the birds build their nests, the phosphorescent fishes light their little lamps, the coral reefs rise slowly in the ocean, and follow the clever monkey tribes in their wanderings through the forest. No naturalist ever told the wonders which these fortunate

children saw as everyday occurrences. Only one science was not taught here, that was philosophy; for how, where everything took place before your eyes, could any one pretend to say, "that may be so, but it may also be otherwise." And as for theological disputes, there could be none when one could listen to Christ Himself, and hear from His own lips the truths He taught, not receive them through the comments of after-times.

There was another thing that did not exist in these islands; that was money. The swans would never have permitted anything so low and degrading to enter their domains. Gold they tolerated, but merely for ornamentation, where it could light up some dull surface. But to traffic with money, and bargain, and barter—that was unheard of. One had so few wants in that exquisite climate, where it was always temperately warm, so that fires were never needed, and where the fruits supplied one with food.

The children also learned the science of gardening, in the same way they learned the rest, by practice and by observation. First they had to learn to recognize what was beautiful. They had books that when they were opened showed them gardens in all ages. And they could see with their own eyes which flowers required warmth

and sunshine, and which throve better with shade and moisture. These children would not make the mistake of looking for Christmas roses in July, or lilies-of-the-valley in September. They had abundance of almonds and peaches, but none the less they understood that there are regions where these do not grow of themselves but require great care and culture.

In all handicrafts they became very skillful, for they had the very best masters. The forging of metals they learned from Hephæstus himself, and years afterwards when they left the Fairy's palace they were in great request all over the world as the most skillful smiths. Wood-carving and carpentry were taught them by the Cinque-centisti, by such craftsmen as had wrought the beautiful rood-screens and tribunes of the old cathedrals, or inlaid their floors with wondrous wood-mosaics. Then there was such dextrous leather work and bookbinding, finer than is ever seen in our days. And how happy were the children as they bound together the parchment leaves they illuminated under the direction of those who had adorned the priceless manuscripts of bygone times. There were opticians, and carvers of precious gems, spinners, and weavers and tapestry makers, and house decorators who studied their art among the Arabs from the

many-colored walls of the Alhambra. Church architects there were whose masters were the pious builders of the Middle Ages. A cathedral, fairer than the fairest structure to be seen on earth, rose in the middle of the lake, so that the architects of the Swan Islands had only the best of models ever before their eyes, and the musicians might always hear the heavenly strains that issued from its open doors, not merely on Sundays and on holy-days, but whensoever church music was asked for. The cathedral, in all its glory, was reflected in the lake, and when the setting sun tinged it with red, and the waves mirrored that glowing image, it was a sight of such haunting loveliness, the tears rose to one's eyes; the joy was far too deep for words.

Those children who, in addition to all these wonders, wished to have stories told them, had but to open the story-book, and presto, all the fairy tales, Little Red-Ridinghood and Cinderella, Schneewittchen, Ali Baba, Puss-in-Boots, all these passed before them, and they lived the stories over again as if they were reality.

They even understood the language of the different animals—above all of the birds, so that in later life they often had warnings from these clever creatures, who see so much farther than human beings. And since they had never will-

fully hurt an animal, all the animals on the whole earth looked on them as their friends. Squirrels, and deer, and foxes, and birds, and bees, and butterflies, and gnats, all would hover round them in perfect confidence, saying to one another: "Look! there is an old friend from the Swan Islands; we are safe with him!" Not one of these children ever ate the flesh of any animal, for since they understood their language and could talk to them, they would have felt like cannibals. They lived on rice, and maize, honey, and fruits of every kind. Mushrooms they knew well, and there were no poisonous kinds upon these isles; all were good to eat. No one ever had any time for quarreling in these happy isles. If any difference of opinion arose, the books were at once referred to and the question was decided, without unnecessary irritation. The Fairy knew everything without being told, and if a child wished to ask her anything, no word was spoken; she looked into his eye, and read there what his trouble was, and gave him counsel and advice. For many a child was puzzled with the choice of a career, and she then looked straight through his eyes into his heart, and could tell him what he was fitted for, so that he might choose without hesitation the path in life in which he could do best.

Illness was of course a thing unknown throughout the swan realms, for if a child were ailing, the Fairy blew gently across his forehead, or laid her soft hand on the hot little head, and he was well again, and joyous as the days were long and the nights mild and balmy. From time to time the swans bore the children to some new island, where there was always something new to be seen and done. On the one, all their clothes were made, and all the little suits and dresses were so pretty and comfortable, and smelled as good as if they had been kept in lavender and new-mown hay. All who wished could learn to make this lovely clothing, and they acquired a lightness of touch and sureness of taste denied to modern tailors.

Another island was the Fairy laundry. Here the good Fairy's own linen had always been washed, and oh! how exquisite that was! It surely must have been spun by spiders, and been woven by the weaver-birds, it was so fine and light, and fell into such graceful folds! To wash it one had only to draw it through the water, and at once it glistened like silver, and flowers were drawn across it to iron it, and it became smooth, and scented, and just like new! Her sheets were just like rose petals and had the perfume, too, of roses, and the curtains seemed to be made

of the light mist, which sometimes lay at dawn upon the lake, refreshing the trees and meadows. The children, too, had beds as fresh as driven snow; and as they were often quite poor children whom the Fairy adopted, it was to them the crowning happiness to escape into this spotless, flower-like cleanliness, out of the dust and dirt of our work-a-day world. In that pure atmosphere there were no horrors of coke and coal, and soot and smoke. For the cool days, the Fairy kept a few sunbeams in reserve, and although somewhat paler than the sun itself, yet when she let these out they sufficed to warm her whole domain. And when a light rain fell, the sunbeams were released and caused the trees and plants to shine with all the colors of the rainbow, so the children were specially fond of rainy days.

The Fairy always gave her orders to the swans in such low tones no one else could hear them; but the swans obeyed at once, and took the children straight to the spot where there was something she wished them to see and understand.

There was no fishing nor any hunting; there was no necessity for anything of the sort, since the fruitful soil yielded enough for nourishment at all seasons. But the squirrels and the children often played at ball together with hazel-

nuts, and then the squirrels would dart away up a tree, and look down and give the funny little cry, with which they gave chase to one another—just as if they laughed at the children because they could not follow them.

Who then were the children who were admitted to the beautiful Swan Islands? They were all motherless little ones, and who had had a very hard time in the world; who had no pleasures, but were cold and hungry, and might perhaps have become wicked from knowing nothing better. All these the good Fairy saved, and carried off with her to her islands, for she could read their hearts, and knew that they would soon become good there, and learn to help others in their turn. It was a pretty sight, when sometimes a poor little waif, grimy and tattered, who had never known kindness in his life, would arrive among those happy children. In a moment they surrounded him, and while some took off his dirty clothes, others prepared a bath, fragrant of roses and mignonette, and the rest made ready a snow-white bed, telling him kindly to have a good rest first, and then they would show him all the wonders of the islands. Some of the newcomers were afraid to mount the swans, and the others had to show them how, letting themselves be carried past by the good swans, and patting and

caressing them. Once a child, in its foolish terror, clasped a swan so tightly round the neck, the poor creature was almost stifled, and sank senseless on the water, whilst the child set up piercing screams. To the little one's astonishment, everyone was first concerned to bring the poor swan back to life. They laid it on the bank, and stroked and rubbed its neck until the Fairy herself came, and with a single touch of the hand made it strong and well again. For days the child was not allowed to get on a swan's back, till it had quite forgotten its fright, and laughed for joy once more to see the others come sailing along so proudly like a small fleet. They looked as if pillowed in soft, downy cushions, as they lay between the swan's wings, and some did actually sleep when they were over-tired from all they had seen. Often it was hard for them to awaken to the real world; the one they were in seemed so much more real, they were only recalled from it by the incredulous looks and jeers of any new arrivals, who thought they were romancing when they told how they had just crossed the desert on a camel, or perhaps had been with the great Napoleon in his Russian campaign, or else had taken part in the Olympian games. For this new world that now lay open to them was so infinite and rich, so manifold and

multiform, they sometimes could scarcely make up their minds which of its wonders to approach.

One thing more was truly remarkable. Some of the children had the gift of inventing new stories, and the good Fairy let them write these down in the parchment books that lined the walls of the little arbors, and if these stories were good and lifelike, so that they would last, then the other children saw them straightway as reality. But if there was no truth, no life in them, nothing at all appeared, and when one took up the book again and opened it, the pages were all blank as if no word had ever been written there. 'Twas thus with everything the children did. If it was building and they erected a house or a church, if it was good it stood there and one could dwell in it, or say one's prayers there, as the case might be. But if the design was worthless, nothing came of it, and even the drawing itself faded by degrees and quite disappeared at last. All these young beings dreaded this test more than any school examination, for it seemed so hard that not a trace of one's work should be left when one had taken such pains. But on the other hand, there could be no greater satisfaction than to see one's idea take shape and endure! Nevermore could it be effaced from the lovely

parchment leaves that were bound together with such consummate skill by the young adepts of bookbinding. Those who illustrated had in like manner to take heed whether their flowers were natural and correct and if their people were living, moving human beings. That proved the picture to be good, otherwise it soon grew pale, and the poorer it was the quicker it vanished. In this way each could be his own best critic, for each could judge of the value of his work before any other saw it, and he could begin over again and correct his mistakes without being mortified. Only those who made too sure of their affair, and were in too great haste to invite their friends to come and admire their performance, exposed themselves to being laughed at when it was found there was nothing to be seen.

The return to the world was very hard to nearly all of them. How could they bear to tear themselves away from the kind Fairy who had been a mother to all of them, and from the dear, good swans who had made their lives as lovely as a waking dream? There was many an unshed tear at parting—many an unspoken entreaty addressed to the eyes that read their inmost thoughts. But already the flapping of the wings was heard as a signal that the swans were ready to bear them back to the outer world. "I have

fitted you out for life," the good Fairy would then say, "so that you can make your own way in the world. I have taught you to work and to love others."

At this the young people would greatly wonder.

"Our work was only play, we never knew what it was to feel fatigue; and as for loving others, since it has been granted to us to see how all things are, and have been, and must ever be, how should any feeling but love and infinite compassion fill our hearts for all who live?"

"It is thus that you are equipped for all that life can bring you! Wherever you go, you will be made welcome, and even those who formerly ill-used you will be glad now of your help."

"But in the world, we were always told work was so hard."

"Not for you who have learned to love work as the best friend of your happiest days, as that which strengthens you and makes you free! You will be good workers all of you whatever work be set you, for in the Islands of the Swanmere all has been good, true, honest work. I have no fear to let you go for you will not forget your training here, and swanlike purity and swanlike reticence will cling to you through life."

Thus spoke the good Fairy, and she accompanied them a little on the way and then took leave of them. And the world took them back again, but not the same as they had been—they came into it now as a great unknown force, as workers, trained in a school for which we have no counterpart, as teachers unrivaled to impart the things they taught, since all these were living facts to them. And the strongest ties of friendship bound them together still as brothers and comrades in spite of all distinctions, though the one might wear a leather apron and his hands be rough with labor, while the delicate fingers of the other drew sweet sounds from some musical instrument. The women who had been brought up on those islands were all alike in being specially good mothers, for they tried to imitate the Fairy and to read their children's hearts when the little ones could find no words to express their meaning.

And what unutterable happiness was theirs, when sometimes in a dream they heard the flapping of the wings, and a swan would carry them back home—back to the good Fairy and the happy islands—to be made welcome there, as if they had never been absent. Only those who proved themselves unworthy could not find the way again; but that was so severe a punishment

that many who had yielded to temptation found strength to resist and to avoid the errors that kept the swans away. These pure, silent creatures seemed always instinctively to avoid the man whose conduct was not upright, and his word not to be trusted. They would turn their long, slim necks a little aside, and swim away to their inaccessible realms, only to reappear if those whom they now shrank from should retrieve the past and regain the right to dream the beauteous dream, that lifts one high above all earthly things.

* * * * *

And now, my dear little friend, I wonder whether you can guess where these wonderful islands are located?

"STAND! WHO GOES THERE?"

It was on the cold, dark, rainy night that followed the bloody battle of Grivitza. King Carol and his little army had together performed prodigies of valor. Three times the gallant rifle corps of Chasseurs and Dorobantzi had been repulsed by the deadly fire that poured down from the walls of Plevna. Unmoved under the heavy rain of bullets, the king kept his stand calmly, in the center of the battle, and his eagle eye never wavered, and his features were as impassive as if carved in marble. But when for the third time he saw his troops repulsed, leaving half their number on the field—two thousand of them already laid there—then the tears streamed down his cheeks. But his voice rang out loud and clear as he stopped the retreating column, exclaiming: "Where are you going? There lies the enemy!"

"Alas! so many have fallen! There are none left for a fresh attack!"

"How? None left? And you who speak? And he who comes hither? There are two of

you! and here is a third! And yonder come others, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten! Return, I say! The redoubt *must* be taken, I tell you! Forward! March!"

Thus did he collect his scattered forces and formed their ranks, and himself led them back into the thick of the fight. And the redoubt was taken, and what is more, the Roumanians held it during the night, in spite of all the efforts of the Turks to drive them from it. From his tent the king listened to the shots that told a new attack was being made, and anxiously he asked himself how his young, untried army would hold out after the hard fighting of the day, that had thinned their ranks so cruelly. He had seen, also, that the redoubt of Grivitza was not Plevna itself; that a valley still lay between the fort and the beleaguered stronghold. His heart was heavy and full of care, and sleep would not come to him. Not a morsel had passed his lips that day, for he shared every privation with his soldiers. Many nights it had snowed so hard upon his camp bedstead, and the wind had blown with such violence that he had been compelled to place a little iron campstool across his feet, to prevent his cloak from being blown off.

To-night before his tent a young soldier stood sentry, very ill-pleased at having to remain there

while his comrades were engaged in action. Here was a fine opportunity gone in which he might have displayed his courage and have won for himself St. George's cross, or the Virtutea Militara. He did not consider that he might have been among those who strewed the battle-field, the moaning of some of whom was more terrible than the silence of the rest as they lay there with their white faces calling Heaven to witness how bravely they had fought. They had fought like lions indeed, but as they said themselves, their shots had all been directed against stone walls, while from behind these walls the Turks had living targets—human flesh and blood—to aim at. But of all that Stan did not think; he only thought how pleased his pretty sweetheart would have been to see him return home wearing the cross upon his breast. He could not know that the taking of Grivitza by no means meant the taking of Plevna; he little thought how many long and weary nights he would still spend in the trenches standing on sentry duty, with his feet half frozen, before the fall of the town itself—he was all eagerness, all attention to the sounds that came over continuously from the fort, the almost incessant cannonade and the sharp volleys of musketry that seemed nevertheless always to keep the same distance, neither

approaching nor going further off. Stan knew as well as the king himself that should the Turks succeed in forcing the lines they would be close upon the tent, and there would be small chance of protecting it. In that case, however, it mattered little to the king what became of his own person, for he could not afford to return home defeated; for him there was only the choice between victory and death, since if vanquished, Roumania would have ceased to exist.

Suddenly the sentinel heard a step approaching, the tread of a tall powerful man, who the next moment stood before him. Except in very old pictures Stan had never seen the uniform the stranger wore. It was not Russian, neither was it Cossack or Turkish. He was covered with a long blue cloak with gold cord, red breeches, and high yellow boots. A strange looking sword, neither rapier nor broadsword, hung at his side. The soldier knew not what to think of the remarkable looking man who stood before him, but after a momentary, involuntary hesitation he lowered his bayonet with the challenge: "Stand! Who goes there?"

"A Roumanian," came the answer in a hollow voice.

"Do you know the password?"

"I know it."



"Stand! Who goes there?"

"Roumania," gave the soldier.

"Stephen the Great," answered the mysterious stranger without a trace of hesitation.

At that the sentinel stepped back, mechanically presenting arms, and the stranger raised his hand graciously in acknowledgment, with an imperious gesture, as of one accustomed always to be saluted thus.

"Is the prince awake?" he asked, preparing to enter the tent.

"He is, your Highness."

"Why do you call me Highness? Do you know me, then?"

"I could swear," the soldier stammered out; "I know you as I know my prayer-book—as I know the holy pictures on the wall, the cross in church. I could swear as truly as I stand here that you are Stephen the Great himself."

The stranger laid his hand on the young man's shoulder: "I knew that you would recognize me."

A thrill of pride and joy ran like fire through the soldier's veins, and he felt as if he could himself accomplish the most heroic exploits, for the hero's touch seemed to rest on him like a benediction lifting him above himself. He could not speak his heart was so full.

The other continued: "I am here to lead

you Roumanians to victory as I have done so often before. Whenever you see me stand beside your king upon the battle-field, then be sure that no harm will come to him, and that you will be victorious."

And with these words Stephen passed into the tent.

The sentinel stood gazing after him. Before his simple soul pictures out of his country's past seemed to rise around the figure of the great national hero. He called to mind the great battles Stephen had fought, in nearly all of which he had been wounded, but out of which he had nearly always come victorious, and had built forty churches to commemorate his victories—for every victory a church! Small wonder that his grateful people honored him as a saint—their noble Stephen, with his strong arm and his mighty heart, and his unfailing trust in God. Stan remembered the story of the terrible night, in which the Turks had driven Stephen back under the walls of his fortress of Neamtzu, and when the fugitive prince, spent with fatigue and bleeding from all his wounds, beat at the gates for admission no hand opened to him, but he heard his mother's voice asking: "Who is the stranger who knocks so loudly at my son's gate?"

"'Tis I, mother; open quickly! My army

is defeated, and I am wounded sorely. Make haste to open, for the Turks are at my heels!"

"Who art thou, stranger, that thou dost dare to speak in my son's name and with his voice? Never did my son come home defeated. He is on the field of battle putting his enemies to flight! And shouldst thou do me the shame of being indeed my son, know this at least—defeated thou shalt never enter here."

Then Stephen sounded a blast upon his horn to collect his scattered troops, and when he had rallied them and revived their sinking courage he routed the Turks, driving them back over the Danube. After that he returned to Neamtzu and made his triumphal entry into the city, welcomed this time by his mother with tears of joy. Ah! She was of the stuff a hero's mother should be made of, that high-souled woman! Another time, when hard pressed by the enemy, he had fled to the mountains, fearing he could hold out no longer, Stephen found shelter in the house of a beautiful and stately woman. Worn out with all his fatigues he fell asleep, but was awakened at dawn by his hostess, leading in her nine sons whom she had sent out during the night to collect troops for him, and who now returned, each with a goodly following. With the army thus brought together Stephen was able to attack the

Turks anew, and he was so successful, gaining victory on victory, that in the end he drove them completely out of the country. His brave deeds compelled the admiration of the whole of Europe, and the pope entered into an alliance with the Roumanian Prince, to whom he gave the title of "Defender of Christendom." Stephen and his little nation were indeed the bulwark holding back the tide of invasion.

All that passed through Stan's mind as he stood there, and he was quite sad when guard was relieved and he had to go away without seeing the noble visitor again. The other soldiers asked him what had happened, and he answered in awe-struck tones: "Stephen the Great is there!" They looked at him thinking the horrors and hardships of these last days, together with the lonely night watch, had been too much for him and had unsettled his brain. But when Stan went on seriously telling them how they might expect to see Stephen beside the king in battle, since he had promised to be there to protect the country and its ruler, then they listened with more attention and crossed themselves, saying that after all it might be true, for signs and wonders have been sent ere now, as Holy Scripture tells us, especially when a little nation is fighting for its liberty against a powerful foe. When at

cockcrow an officer came to report to the king that the night attack on the redoubt had been repulsed he was found fast asleep, leaning his head on his hand. Directly he awakened he looked around as if his eyes sought some one, and he asked at once whether nobody had entered the tent during the night. "Nobody," replied the attendants, "until the officer arrived bearing his dispatches."

"But I most certainly saw," the king began, and then he paused, telling himself it must have been a dream. He must have dreamed that Stephen the Great had come into his tent that night, and had talked for a long time with him, foretelling the victory, and giving him counsel how he might best dispose his little army. It had all seemed so real, the king could hardly believe that it had been only a dream; but if it were, then it must have been a dream sent to bring him hope and comfort in the hour of peril.

To Stan it was hardly a surprise next morning to see the strange guest of the night before riding the whole time close at the king's elbow, seeming, with his far-reaching eyes, to scan the battle-field in all directions, and ever and anon lifting his hand to ward off the shot that menaced the prince whom he had come to lead to victory. It was often said that King Carol exposed himself far

more than a leader should on whose life so much depended, but Stan knew that there was no danger. Stan saw how the great Stephen's hand was always held protectingly above Carol's head to keep off all peril.

One terrible night in the trenches in the blinding snow and sleet, when many of the soldiers had their feet frostbitten from standing in the icy water, Stephen appeared again and spoke to Stan, telling him of the unsuccessful attack that would take place on the morrow, but that the Roumanians must not lose courage, for in the end the victory would be theirs. Stan thought of this during the changeful fortune of the next day's fighting, and remained calm and hopeful throughout the worst moments. Once a bullet struck him, but his wound was only slight, though his cap was riddled in three places by other bullets.

On the night preceding December 10th, Stephen the Great appeared to Osman Pasha and told him of the hopelessness of further resistance. "'Tis all in vain you seek to prolong the struggle," spoke the vision to the brave Turkish commander. "Your sortie of the morrow will be unavailing. Plevna must fall; it is written that my people shall enter within its walls. Not all your valor can now retard the fatal moment.



The whole way was strewn with corpses of friends and foes.

But you have held out like a hero; you will be honored as a hero in surrender, and old scores will be cleared off this day between thy people and mine. The task which I had to leave unfinished when death called me away, Carol now accomplishes after all these years."

And on the morrow Plevna fell, and King Carol rode forward to meet the wounded Osman, complimenting him on his magnificent defense, which had lasted far beyond the period any man could have expected. Had the siege lasted but a few days longer, had Stephen not been there to protect his brave Roumanians, they must all have perished. For a snowstorm arose such as is only seen in our plains—a storm that neither men nor horses could live through, with twenty degrees below zero, and such huge blocks of floating ice upon the Danube that not a scrap of food could be brought across the river.

The king left Plevna with his troops and set out upon the most awful ride of his whole life. The whole way from Plevna to Nicopolis was strewn with corpses alike of friends and foes, and the greatest numbers were the Turks who had come away from Plevna starving. Dead bodies were sitting, lying, standing everywhere — frozen so hard that they did not even fall over. Other poor wretches were to be seen stretching out

their arms in mute appeal to heaven, and then falling down dead. The horses in the gun-carriages were frozen in the shafts, the drivers frozen at their posts. In one place a little group had collected round a wheel, to which they had set fire, to have a little warmth, but all were dead. At every step King Carol's horses started and shied, trying to avoid treading on the corpses which lay everywhere beneath the snow. And overhead wheeled the ravens, disturbed in their hideous feast, to which they settled again as the advancing army passed on. It was a ghastly sight. But all the way Stephen the Great rode by King Carol's side.

At last Nicopolis was reached. There in the trenches around the fortress the Turkish prisoners were crowded together, clamoring for bread. But bread was not to be obtained, because the passage of the Danube was still blocked with ice so that no boat could make its way across. Many almost perished that night from cold and hunger. But Stan, who had ridden in the king's escort, and had never lost sight of his leader, saw that Stephen was always there; it was he who rode by the king's side and kept his horse from stumbling on the steep incline that resembled a sheet of ice that led to the citadel. It was he who mounted guard at night before the king's door, and then went

round among the ranks, speaking words of comfort and encouragement to all the weary, dispirited soldiers. Thanks to him, nearly all of the ten thousand who reached there survived the horrors of that cruel night. Next day the king contrived to cross the river in a small launch. The boat was constantly caught between blocks of ice that one minute almost tossed it in the air, and the next threatened to sink it utterly, but Stan, who was watching from the shore, saw a lofty form step out in front of it across the ice, and the boat seemed to follow where he beckoned, and to steer its way safely through that perilous passage. Then Stephen guided the little craft until it touched the shore, and the king could set his foot once more in safety on Roumanian soil. It was he, too, Stan thought, who helped the other little boats to cross from the Roumanian side, laden with provisions for those who were hungering. After that Stan saw him no more, and for a time he knew not what happened. For finally he had been compelled to go into a hospital. His feet had been frostbitten and were already turning black, and it was feared he might lose them, like so many a poor fellow in that campaign. But they were saved, thanks to good care and nursing; while the thought of him whom he had seen cheered and sustained him through those trying

hours. He knew the cause they were fighting for must triumph, he knew that the king was destined to lead their nation to glory and prosperity, since the greatest it had ever brought forth stood by his side and blessed his undertaking. King Carol showed himself in all things the worthy continuator of his great predecessor's work; he, too, built beautiful churches throughout the whole land in thankfulness to God for the favor he had shown him.

The day the troops made their triumphant entry into Bucharest he saw Stephen the Great once more—a mere shadowy form, riding beside the king. Another shadow, that of Michael the Brave, came toward them, saluting his valiant brother-in-arms from afar. Stan bore the colors and on his breast shone both the cross of St. George and the medal of the Virtutea Militara. His hand shook with excitement as he recognized the heroes, and he wanted to point them out to others, but they saw nothing and only thought Stan still a little weak in the head from his wound.

But to that he replied that it was only three toes he had lost, and that could only effect one in the feet and not in the head.

As long as he lives Stan will remember his "Stand! who goes there?" of that night in Gri-

vitza, and he tells it to his children and to his friends when they sit under the trees and smoke on holiday afternoons. And the older ones all laugh and say: "What a good story he tells!" but do not believe a word of it. But the children believe it, and are delighted, and feel sure that their country will become great and strong, since it is protected by the great men of old days, who have been seen giving aid to their king.

AFTER THE CONCERT

The Master's great work had just been performed under his own direction. There was a full orchestra, and the audience numbered two thousand. The enthusiasm was indescribable! Flowers and laurel wreaths were showered upon the great composer, the frantic crowd almost stormed the little platform where he stood to conduct, and made his arm ache with the violent hand-shaking forced upon him. Women shed tears and men applauded vociferously. It was a complete triumph, a scene of delirious excitement. Only one person was not satisfied, only one felt no inclination to rejoice, and that was the Master himself. He felt instead a sudden oppression—almost a nervous disquietude—at his heart. He was suffering from the lassitude and nausea which invariably set in when that which one has worked at for years in the sanctuary of one's own study, and carried about even longer in the still more inviolable sanctuary of one's heart, is for the first time produced in public, and they understand it as they can and will, but never as the master intended it.

To-day the Master felt keenly that the electric current which he had counted on was missing. Those very passages which were to him the finest and most important were coldly received. And at this he felt a mist pass before his eyes, hiding the music-score from him, and slowly enveloping the whole orchestra. There is always a reaction from the nervous strain and fatigue of the work itself, and of the rehearsals, and a feverish impatience to turn from it to the new work already planned in his brain, which is to be so much finer than the last. And there one has to stand and let one's self be applauded and congratulated, when one would so much rather be at home—alone in one's own little sanctum, alone with the Muse, alone in the atmosphere of sweet sound, that seems always to prevail there.

And yet to-day the Master felt that he could not go straight home when all was over. The agitation was still too great from all the emotions he had undergone, all the impressions received. He wished to be alone—and the next minute he could not bear the loneliness. That he was expected at a great banquet, to be given in his honor, had utterly escaped him. He wandered about restlessly in the empty streets trying in vain to rid himself of the horrible sensation of nausea that sat like a nightmare on him—then, scarcely con-

scious of what he did, he returned to the concert room.

The lights were all extinguished; only the moon shone in, and its rays lighted up everything so brightly, wherever they fell, that the surrounding darkness seemed all the deeper by the contrast. Numbers of instruments, carefully shut in their cases, were still lying about. The piano seemed to have been forgotten, for it had been left open.

Still half unconsciously the Master sat down before it, and let his fingers wander dreamily over the keys. And as he did so the whole weight of his soul-sickness and weariness seemed to slip from him, like an actual burden falling from his shoulders to the floor. The nightmare was gone; he could breathe again. And he played on and on; he tried over again certain passages which had fallen short of his expectations, which had borne quite a different signification to himself. But involuntarily he soon left this piece, which now in reality lay behind him, and went on improvising. He had a new and marvelous project in his mind, a vast conception of which he had not yet spoken to anyone, and he was seeking expression for it.

All at once he thought he heard a gentle tap. He looked around, but there was nobody to be seen. He thought he must have been mistaken, but again there was a rap behind him, and now, when



Little by little the whole orchestra seemed to be aroused.

he turned, he saw that the case of the first 'Cello was opening slowly, and it sounded as if footsteps came stealthily down into the hall. There was a fresh rapping, and this time it was the First Violin that left its case, and then the two Bass Viols came out together, arm in arm, supporting one another as if they were not quite sober. The Flute came hopping along in the maddest style all over the benches and music stands, giggling and balancing itself on its one leg, as if it were inventing a new dance. The Violas walked along at a majestic pace, but the French Horn summoned its comrades in rather boisterous style, at which the Bassoon grew slightly cross, and muttered something about the unbearable noise. The big Drum gave one sharp beat, and then began rolling in a mysterious and spectral fashion, as if it would wake the dead. Little by little the whole orchestra seemed to be aroused, and now began many whispered conversations, scraps of which the Master overheard, and was much amused at. For he discovered that the instruments themselves had been criticising him the whole time, and that they had much more to say than the human beings. Each instrument spoke of the special difficulties of its own part, which it naturally thought the chief feature in the whole performance. It was really very amusing to hear them. The First

Violins had a great deal to say—they wanted to be praised for their tone; and when the Bassoon told them that they had no tone, they fell upon the musicians for not knowing how to play them as they ought to be played.

"We will show what we can do when we are left to ourselves," cried the indignant Violins, "and when no stupid men are there to spoil us by their clumsiness!"

"And we should like to play entirely true at last!" sighed the Horns.

"That remains to be seen!" growled the Bassoon.

"And I will play a solo!" screamed the Piccolo in her thin little voice, but the others put her down at once as a forward, impertinent minx; they all disliked her for perpetually trying to make her voice heard above the rest.

"I will show you what a solo should be!" said the 'Cello, almost to himself, while the Double-bass paid court to the Violin, telling her she was the prima donna, and that the whole orchestra was in reality only there for her. But the Violin did not find the Double-bass very interesting, and turned her back on him somewhat curtly.

They were all walking about of their own accord. It was very funny to see how they

moved—just like very slim or very stout people. The Double-bass had quite a solemn air. The Trombone stalked along bolt upright, carrying its head very high, on account of the prominent part it played in sacred concerts. The Trumpets were a little bit vulgar; they swaggered and boasted of their connection with the army, and were, therefore, dreadfully looked down upon by the Violins. Only the Harp stood quite still, waiting dreamily to see what the others would do. The 'Cellos waddled about, portly and important. They were the actual leaders, on whose thoroughness the proper execution and ultimate success of every concerted piece must depend. They were fully aware of this, but kept their counsel, lest it should irritate the Violins. By degrees they all took their places, but not in quite the same order as usual.

"Do not quarrel, children," the big Drum called out, "or I shall have to let you see what I can do. I will beat such a roll for you as will deafen you all. You little know the strength I have."

The Violins had in truth already begun to quarrel with the others, complaining that they were too crowded for the really brilliant execution they were bent on, and that they wished to show for once what they could do.

"Now, then, a little moderation, please!" grumbled an old Viola. "There are more of us here who would like to have our solos, and be heard, too."

"What, you?" sneered the Violins, turning up their noses.

"Attention!" shouted the big Drum. "I am going to beat time, and whoever makes a false start will have to pay a forfeit."

"What forfeit?" tittered the Flutes, and one of them drew herself out to her full length. "Pray let us hear what sort of forfeit you propose."

"It shall be to invent a solo, quite different from anything that has ever yet been played, in a new key, that has never been heard before, and that yet is perfectly harmonious, and with variations that it would puzzle the devil himself to play."

The Master listened attentively. What would be the result of all this? But who shall describe his feelings as the instruments struck up, with such delicacy and precision, as if all the greatest masters in the world were playing them—as if the most renowned performers, whom one only hears as stars, had all seated themselves in the orchestra!

And what was it they played? His own new symphony, the work of which he had not yet

breathed a syllable—the work that was to contain his best thought, the outpouring of his inmost soul—here found expression! The listener stood entranced, and big tears stole slowly down his cheek at this realization of his most cherished dreams. Never had he thought it possible, and never, never, surely again, would it be granted him to hear his own ideas thus divinely interpreted. There was a pause, in which the performers deliberated about their improvisation, and the master received from them many valuable hints about the treatment of those passages with which he himself was least satisfied.

The Horn had introduced a solo that was a masterpiece, and in its purity and softness almost rivaled the Violins. The obligato for the Viola was simply a revelation. And one and all they had found out perfectly new harmonies. The listener marveled at the wondrous intuition with which they appeared to seize the exact shade of meaning he intended to convey—even at times, by some subtle touch, lending a richness and fullness to the musical phrase beyond all he had dreamed of. Was that his own work, the masterly employment of counterpoint in fugues and canons?

Again they paused to collect themselves.

The master trembled, for now came the adagio, into which he had put his whole soul, and on the worthy rendering of which his life's happiness seemed to be staked. He trembled; they were not going to play it? But yes; they had begun the movement, and it was of such surpassing loveliness that the listener would have fallen on his knees in ecstasy had he not feared the slightest movement to disturb the flow of melody. But his heart throbbed with every vibration, recognizing its own utterances in these heavenly tones. And as his glance swept around the hall, he realized that it was no longer empty. There, in the moonlight, sat an audience. In the next pause he looked around again more carefully, and well-nigh swooned in excess of wonder and delight. For it seemed to him that he saw sitting there all the musicians of by-gone days —Weber and Gluck and Spohr and Bach, and Handel, too; and there was Chopin, and not far off Schubert and Schumann, and then Mozart and Beethoven. There were many whose faces were unknown to him, but that they were masters was shown sufficiently by their attitude and by the earnest intensity of look and gesture. And as he looked across to the orchestra again he saw that it was peopled with all the greatest virtuosi—Vieuxtemps and Paganini, and other

incomparable artists sat at every instrument! He could not believe his eyes. Could it be that all his earthly idols were assembled here in such close contact, that he had but to put out his hand to touch them?

With the first notes of the scherzo began a fairy dance, such as Mendelssohn might barely have imagined, with melodies exquisite as Schumann's sweetest fancies.

Then, like a hurricane let loose, they dashed into the finale. It was as though a mighty whirlwind swept over sea and land, stirring the ocean from its depths till the crests of the billows touched the sky, and heaven and earth laughed together in unison. Wilder and wilder swelled the tempest, and the sonorous blast of the wind instruments mingled with the yearning wail of the strings, as they vied with one another in their mad pace, in their furious onslaught. Suddenly, at its height, the storm subsided; its fierce cries were hushed to a whisper. No discord and plaudits broke that lull—only an occasional sign from one or other of the spirit audience called for the repetition of some theme, bidding the ghostly players quicken the tempo here or give to the movement there a more melting intonation. And the least hint was acted on, the slightest wish obeyed.

By what mysterious means, through what occult channel the communication was effected, was beyond the ken of the solitary mortal in that weird assembly. But he was in his own person conscious that some such medium existed, for the unspoken suggestions of the audience seemed to flash upon his brain at the very moment when they were taken up and translated into sound by the musicians. Seated over there in the shadow of his corner by the piano, with these glorious strains surging around him, it might well seem to the Master that he was scarcely longer a creature of flesh and blood, so far did he feel himself removed from all earthly things. And but an hour ago he had doubted his own talent, had called himself a failure, a mere bungler—all the hard names one calls one's self in the moment of disgust and despair at an unachieved ideal! And now it appears that he had been cared for and watched over all this while by those whom his soul most reverenced—that the best and greatest had not disdained to lend him aid—that Mozart had whispered melodies to him, and Bach had taught him harmonies! His heart was overflowing.

The last measures drew to a close, the last chords of the orchestra died away on the air. Then suddenly new sounds arose, faint and indis-



"Work on, and have no fear! We, thy good angels, will never leave thee."

tinct at first, but gradually gathering strength and fullness. Just as the tiny murmur of the sea shell produces the ripple of far-off waves, so the chant of the seraphic choir seemed to steal to the Master's ear from within the instrument upon which he was leaning. What were these voices that echoed within his soul like a rhapsody, in words that grew every instant more distinct? "Work on, and have no fear! Give vent to all the great thoughts in thee! Be not daunted by coldness or rebuffs. We, thy good angels, who have shared thy vigil, will never leave thee. We have shown thee—have let thee hear for once the perfect rendering of that which thy genius would fain achieve. Listen to its promptings, and let thy spirit soar higher and higher on the wings of Music! Write quickly now, ere thou forget the lessons of this night!"

There before him lay within reach a pile of music-paper. He pulled it toward him, drew from his pocket a pencil and began to write. Never had his hand flown with such feverish haste over the paper; it was as if it were impossible to keep pace with the thoughts that streamed from his brain. But were these indeed his own thoughts? Was there not rather some voice dictating to him? Were not his fingers guided—was he a free agent, or merely the mouthpiece for something greater than

himself? He wrote on and on, mechanically, and must have fallen asleep while writing, for when he awoke it was broad daylight, and the fingers still held the pencil, while before him, carefully written, lay the whole work. It was all ready for instrumentation, and the recollections of the night were still fresh and vivid in him to help him with that. He must have been writing in his sleep all through the night—or had his friends from the spirit-world done the work for him? He rubbed his eyes, and contemplated the scattered sheets of paper, wondering.

A noise at the door aroused him from his reverie. It was the musicians returning to the concert-room to take away their instruments, and they started in surprise to find him there, and stared at the pile of paper lying at his feet.

"Yes, I have been writing something," he said, in answer to their astonished and inquiring looks.

They told him that they had waited for him at the banquet and had sought him at his own home, and that at last they had been obliged to content themselves with drinking his health in his absence. He scarcely heard what they said—he was still lost in the remembrance of that night of wonders.

The musicians stood amazed as they came nearer and realized the work he had accomplished

in those hours. "It is marvelous!" they exclaimed. "How could you find the strength after all you had just gone through to finish in one night what it would have taken others six weeks to do?"

"I was not alone; the masters helped me," he was on the point of saying, but he knew they would not understand, so he only smiled, and kept his secret to himself.

He went home, and the sight of his little dwelling filled him with emotion, for he knew that it was often honored with the presence of those whom he had most revered and loved. Henceforth it would be sacred in his eyes, this modest abode, into which such noble guests did not disdain to enter, and an outburst of joy and gratitude was now heard within the walls that had too often echoed his complaints and sighs. He opened the piano, and a flood of melody poured forth from it. There seemed no limits to the inspiration that had taken hold of him — no bounds to the riches in his heart and brain.

People often wondered to see the Master so light-hearted, for his path in life had been thorny, and thus far his portion had been chiefly poverty and heartache. Now he was content, whatever happened, and when material prosperity came to him as well, he was as free and open-handed with

his worldly goods as he had ever been with the creations of his genius.

The experience of that one night was never repeated. More than once it could not be granted to any one, but the once sufficed for an entire lifetime. What need to call up again that which is always with one, of which the presence cheers and warms one's heart till death? And never again could the master doubt his own powers. He knew who they were who watched over him and lent him their aid.

From thenceforth a great peace entered into his soul, and as he went about helping young musicians, and scattering gladness on all sides, people knew that he was a man inspired from Above.

A FESTIVAL IN HEAVEN

In heaven was high holiday. The angels danced and sang for very joy. Their nimble feet sped so lightly over the blossoms in the grass, not one grain of pollen was scattered from the flower-cups. Hand in hand they swept along in a never-ending chain, and their song was as sweet as is the song of the birds or the murmur from the strings of a wind-swept harp. Each tone was a sunbeam awakening life. Wheresoe'er the rays of music fell, there flowers sprang up, fresher and fairer than any that bloom on earth. 'Twas a blaze of rich color, such as one scarce may dream of here below.

And why then, these rejoicings? Why this exultation? The tidings had but now gone forth that many new souls should enter heaven that day, and straightway all the angels flocked together to bid them welcome. From far and near in the transparent sky-depths they gathered with smiling lips, and gazed with their sweet, child-like eyes, wondering for whom they should rejoice that day.

And behold a little band of youths and maidens drew near with faltering steps, and spoke with mournful tones, "We have left behind us all our dear ones; none awaits us here."

One of these was a king's son; the next a poor girl who had known cold and hunger all her days on earth; the third a young lad whose short life had been spent in pain and sickness. Well did they see the splendor and the glorious angels, but deemed not these could tarry there for them, and their hearts sank within them. Then suddenly around them swayed the angels. Their hands were clasped in those of the bright beings, who led them on across the flowery mead to heights more dazzling still, where forms as youthful as their own greeted them, exclaiming, "Long have we waited for you; welcome now at last!" And ere they were well aware, they, too, were floating over the greensward; nor did their footsteps bend or break a single flower. And when they heard how passing sweet the strains, and saw the angels how they shone, they lifted up their own low, timid voices to join in the song. Then came upon them such contentment, they thought no more how they had fared on earth, and had well-nigh forgotten the very mother for whom they erstwhile longed so sorely.

"Thy mother will soon come," said one of

the fair beings; and therewith was their heartache stilled, and they grew calm and strong.

"Thy mother will soon come!" These were the angel's words, and they who heard them never paused to think if "soon" must needs import the same in heaven as on earth. How they rejoiced to learn that they might see the homestead and their dear ones; not merely from afar, but even hover round and strive to cheer the mourners, amid their own blissful wanderings among the stars. They perceived the littleness of earth, the nothingness of time.

"I thought my pain intolerable," cried he who had been the poor sick lad. "I called heaven cruel that let me suffer thus since I had done no wrong. And now I see that it was all too little, all too light, for such reward."

"What, then, are these angels coming toward us?" the king's son asked. "And see! they carry little children's souls in their arms, to greet the mothers who have mourned for them so long."

They looked and saw a poor young mother linger on the threshold, wringing her hands and gazing earthwards, with the bitter cry: "My children, my poor little ones! All, all were taken from me."

"Nay, not all," spoke a fair angel, gently placing in her arm the child that had reached

heaven before her. She fell upon her knees and rocked her child, and wept no more.

Close on her steps followed another, who, as heaven's glory burst upon her, cried: "Alas! here is no place for me. These surely are the mansions of the blest!"

"And therefore is thy place among them," said a radiant being, leading her forward. "Just therefore art thou here that thou mayst forget all the ills laid upon thee in thy lifetime Thou hast done with earth; life was but an evil dream that now lies far behind thee."

Now entered side by side a woman aged and trembling, and a young king. Both stood awe-struck, and the king flung down his crown and let slip from his shoulders the purple mantle, meaningless here, where no wretchedness asks to be consoled. But the old woman, trembling still, turned to him: "I know thee. Thou didst once befriend me in my need. Befriend me now!"

"I have no power to help thee," said the king; "I myself tremble, for I know my own unworthiness. I fear there is some error."

"Fear not! Both of you are right welcome," murmured a musical voice; and a beauteous angel threw one arm about the king, whilst the poor woman took refuge in the shadow of the outspread wings. "Thy place, O king! has long



She fell upon her knees and rocked her child.



stood waiting for thee. Thy course is run; in thy short span of life so much hast thou performed, no more is asked of thee. Go on now further, higher. Greater things await thee here, and better happiness than life could give."

And still the heavenly hosts came streaming by, and there was room for all. Some took up the pilgrim staff again, preparing to return and aid the poor suffering mortals; others strove with good words to cheer such of the newcomers as were sad and careworn, having lost all faith in heaven. "I starve," spoke one of these, an old man, worn and weary; but ere the words were fairly said the pangs of hunger left him, and in their place the strength, the grace, and fire of youth came back to him.

No word here ever sounded loud or harsh, no tone discordant; all was harmony. Love reigned supreme, since here was no struggle for daily bread, for rank and riches, for place and power. Each had an equal claim to the self-same happiness, the self-same rest. Some asked for rest alone—rest and repose from all the toil and trouble of their lives. And perfect rest was granted them. Others begged that they might satisfy their thirst for learning. These, too, had their wish, yet only in such measure as they had

earned it by the stores of knowledge acquired on earth. Now, without effort, they might drink from the very source of perfect wisdom, of eternal truth.

Sadly they saw the gates of heaven closed on many who in their self-righteousness felt sure of access. These spoke of their blameless lives; but when 'twas asked them what kindness they had ever done, what suffering borne, what wrong redressed, they had no answer ready. In vain they wept. The door swung to.

But heaven smiled on, reflected in the lips and eyes of countless happy beings, each of whom seemed to bear within his breast a little heaven, radiating light and helping to increase the universal splendor. Each one of these at peace within himself, gave peace and rest to others. The gifts of each made up the general gladness, for envy and discontent and pride and self-love had no place here. And many first began here in the after-life rightly to discern the beauty of the things of earth. Wistfully they recalled the marvels of the trees and flowers, the churches and cathedrals, pictures and music; they realized that these had been one and all portraits of heaven itself, which only their own folly failed to see.

New revelations followed. Cripples and such as seemed deformed on earth here lacked no beauty, since their souls were fair; the poor were

just as rich as others in that they felt no need. And they were justified whom an unthinking world had oft misjudged and persecuted; and childish hearts, misunderstood and smarting 'neath unkindness or neglect, were healed and comforted.

A little lad stood weeping in the gateway. A pitying angel bent down and asked what ailed him.

"My violin. What has become of it? My own dear little violin! What have they done with it? I held it under my arms at the last concert, when all the people clapped their hands so loud, and my poor head was aching so; and then I fell asleep—fast asleep over there in the great far-off America. O, how tired I was! I played, and played, and played, and grew more tired with every concert; and my mother was not there, and not a creature who cared for me. I had to go on playing and earning money, however tired I might be. Where am I now? Tell me, I pray thee, if thou canst."

"Dear child, thou art in heaven. Dost thou not feel how soft the air? And listen to the lovely music."

"But heaven is nothing to me without my violin!" he cried, weeping anew.

"I will give thee mine."

"Thine? Canst thou do so? And is it really a good one? I cannot tell thee how I had to

work and work till I could buy mine; and now it is gone. They have taken it away, and when I wake out of this beautiful dream, then I shall be only a poor, lost child, alone and strange, in the great, big America. I shall have to go and beg!"

"No, no, child. Here are neither rich nor poor; none has to beg here; each has his heart's desire, and each and all may worship God with their music."

"And am I dead, then?"

"Thou art dead on earth, so that thou mayst be happy forevermore. See, here I have a violin for thee."

The boy gazed at it sorrowfully. "One cannot play on that. What is it made of?"

"Try it; thou soon wilt find out how to play it."

The violin was as transparent as crystal; the strings seemed made of sunshine, and the bow was like a flower-stalk. Doubting, and with a sigh, the lad raised to his shoulder the feather-weight, and drew the flower-stalk across the strings. A sound came forth of such divine sweetness he scarce could trust his ears, for never in a dream had he heard aught like this. He stood entranced.

"But such an instrument was never meant for

me! Even in heaven these cannot be given away!" he cried, handing back the violin reluctantly.

The angel smiled. "Soon thou shalt make such playthings for thyself; thou needst but will to do so."

"And then will God Himself listen to my playing?"

"Yes, God Himself."

"Ah, how I fear that I soon shall awake out of this beautiful dream, and it will all be gone."

"Nay, not so; this dream has no awakening. Thou shalt dream on forever."

"And shall the violin always be mine?"

"Always thine own."

"Then let me go at once to thank God for it."

"Ah, child!" thou still hast far to go to reach His throne."

"No matter; I will find the way."

And the lad started boldly, playing his best, while all the heavens were hushed upon his passage, to listen to him. On he went, ever farther, deeper, higher, and knew not that a hundred years had passed, and yet another, since he set out to reach the strongest light, where, as he thought, God's throne must be. And when he saw a glorious spirit, who seemed a king of the

whole world, and round whom waves of music surged perpetually, then the boy said to himself, "Surely, I have reached my journey's end."

But this was Beethoven, and further on was Mozart, shining like the sun. Again the lad thought, "This can be none other than God Himself."

But Mozart smiled and taught him a new melody, and said, "Only think of music; 'tis all thou hast to do to be a greater composer than any of us."

Marveling, the young musician called up in his mind the noble "Mass in B minor," by the great master, Bach, and answering to his thoughts, the tones swelled round him, not marred by imperfections, as in our cathedrals, but with a fullness so divine the listener stood spellbound.

"Now, if I but dared to think some music of my own," he cried, when the sweet sounds had ceased. Then of itself the violin began softly playing, and an unseen orchestra took up the melody. How it was the boy knew not, but all he thought passed straightway into music. "Now surely God Himself will listen unto me," he spoke proudly.

"Aye, He will hear thee." 'Twas as though the light made answer. He raised his eyes, but they were dazzled by the splendor, as ours are

when we look straight at the midday sun. There he stood motionless, forgetting all things; forgetting even to play, for all the air was music, and the light was music, too; and ages passed; he took no heed, rapt in those wondrous harmonies.

An angel touched him lightly on the shoulder. "Enough! 'Tis now for thee to gladden others. Come!"

"But first I want to see God, so that I can thank Him."

"Thou hast seen Him face to face but now. More fully than to most of us has this been granted to thy childlike innocence. No need hast thou to thank in words as thou wouldst thank an earthly benefactor. He looks into thy heart and reads thy thoughts. Come now to those who wait for thee. Beethoven is there, deaf no longer, and Homer and Milton are no longer blind. Rather is theirs more perfect sight and hearing than others boast of, since they did ever see and hear with the soul's eyes and ears alone."

So he passed on, transfigured, but conscious still of his high fortune. He only knew that all the spirits looked kindly at him, and that all rejoiced in his achievement.

There came along, also, that festal day, a poor little maid, hunchbacked and lame. She was

amazed that such delight should welcome her, since none had ever taken delight in her on earth. She held her crutches tight, thinking she could not walk without them, and wondered much to feel her feet so light. And more and more she wondered as she found two snow-white wings spring from her poor, misshapen shoulders, while her hair began to sparkle like rays of moonlight, and the long procession of angels passing by drew her on with them in their shining ranks.

"And what couldst thou do upon earth?" one of them questioned her, with laughing tone. "But little, surely."

"Why, yes, 'twas little," she replied. "I had learned to embroider a little, and thus I could earn my daily bread."

"Then look before thee and tell me what thou seest."

And as she looked the grass beneath her feet and everywhere far as her eye could reach became a rich, embroidered carpet, studded with silken flowers of varied hues.

"And now," the angel told her, "whenever thou dost want a gold thread for thy work, stretch out thy hand among the sunbeams and draw one forth. So shall gold never lack thee. We know thee for a skillful workwoman."

"Am I really in heaven?"

"Aye, in heaven, where thou hast so often longed to be."

"How was that known to thee?"

"All things concerning thee are known to me. I was thy guardian angel in thy lifetime, and whatsoever thought of gladness was ever thine, 'twas I who whispered it."

"But how did I come here?" she asked, bewildered. "I am not good enough. I have done nothing to deserve reward."

"Nothing?" The angel's voice was low and tender. "I watched thee when thy little fingers stitched untiringly from morn till night, for thy poor old mother's sake. I saw thee bear the sharpest pain in silence that others might not grieve. I know that in thy direst poverty thou always hadst thy mite to spare for those yet poorer than thyself. If none else knew or understood, I at least know how well thou hast deserved."

A pale, sad woman stood one moment on the threshold, then turned to go. An angel stopped her. "Why dost thou turn away?"

"How can I stay? What is there here for me? I am strangely out of place amid this splendor, so poor am I. I have not even a seemly dress in which to come among you."

"Nay, look more closely; look again and see,

thy dress is like to ours. The garments that are given us here are those that we have woven for ourselves during our lifetime."

"Fair creature, whosoe'er thou art," she answered, "thou canst not understand the things of earth. I was not rich enough to weave myself a dress—I had no time, and I was far too sad. Since I lost my eldest girl, my one help and comfort, life has been only a burden to me. I thought to find her here; but if that hope be vain, then neither shall I stay."

"Mother! look at me well!" the angel spoke; and with a cry of joy the mother folded in her arms the daughter she had loved and lost and mourned so long. She held her fast as though afraid to lose her yet again.

"How my poor heart ached for thee," she cried. "Let me look in thine eyes to satisfy this long, long yearning. And yet I fear me lest death step once more between us and leave us desolate indeed."

"Nay, mother; here there is no death; here there is naught but light and life."

"Tell me again that all is well with thee. Art thou never hungry, never cold? Ah, when I think a little warmth, a little spark of fire, might have kept life in thee!"

"All that is over, mother dear; we want no

fire to warm us here. The golden light is warmth enough, and all its radiance never tires our eyes. Come, lean on me; let us go farther. There is still much for thee to see and learn."

"Stay, stay—the little ones; may we not first fetch them?"

"Not yet awhile."

"But they are cold and hungry still. I had gone out to beg for bread for them—it had come to that—and then I felt my senses go—I fell—I knew no more till I awakened here. I thought surely I must have strayed into some rich man's palace, from which I should be driven away. Now it all comes back to me—and my poor little ones are waiting for me still without bread to eat."

"Nay, mother, they have all they want. There are kind souls on earth to care for them. All the time that thou wast ill and helpless they were fed and clothed and tended. Thou shalt see it for thyself. We may watch over them together, for according to the measure of suffering thou hast borne, so shall thy happiness be. This is but the beginning. Come!"

Thus they spoke, upward soaring, the mother scarcely daring yet to trust her wings, and all unconscious, too, that she had grown as young and fair as the fair young form she clung to. The

trailing garments, light as gossamer, that floated around them were no hindrance to their flight, as meteor-like across the sky they flashed, and seemed to melt into the eternal light, whose vivid splendor pales our noonday sun.

Another angel, bearing in his arms a girl of wondrous beauty, hastened in. The angel's face was grave—sad, even as angels may be sad when they have brushed too close against human misery. He laid the girl, whose eyes were closed in death, down gently on a bed of soft green moss, among narcissus flowers shining like stars. The heavy eyelids opened slowly, and as the girl regained consciousness her tears flowed fast. But the pitying angel knelt beside her and fanned her with sweet-scented flowers, and sprinkled her with crystal dewdrops, until at last a smile stole over the poor, pale face. Then she wept again, exclaiming, "I could not save my father—my poor father. Where is he? He must have perished in the flames, he and the whole house. I shall never see them more."

She lifted up her eyes and saw her father standing there. For one brief moment both were speechless; their hearts stood still; their joy was too deep for words. Then, as it ever is when mortal hearts torn asunder meet in eternity, all heaven resounded with triumphal echoes. It



Another angel bearing in his arms a girl of wondrous beauty.

was as though the buds and blossoms danced for glee, and the stars all sang in chorus.

Then a man rushed in, haggard and breathless, and gazed around with desperate eyes, like some poor, hunted animal, fleeing for life.

"Where am I, and where are my chains?" he gasped. "If I am discovered, they will drag me back to prison!"

"Thou hast done forever with prison and with chains," replied with calm voice a stately angel. "I helped thee to escape and brought thee here, where thou art safe, and none can harm thee."

"Dost thou know they call me murderer?"

"In heaven we judge not as men judge; we see more clearly, and can more finely distinguish right from wrong. See, there comes one who was in truth a criminal, but he, too, has suffered, and has expiated his crime." And turning to the newcomer, the angel said, "Thou art forgiven."

The poor wretch shook from head to foot.

"Let me hear that blessed word again. Say it once more. And yet it cannot be for me. Did I not slay a fellow creature in my blind fury, from hatred and revenge?"

"And didst thou not pine for thirty years in prison? Did not for thirty years the iron of

thy chains eat into thy flesh, while the still sharper irons of remorse was entering thy soul? Hast thou not repented? God saw thy tears shed in the long, dark, lonely nights, when no human eye beheld thee. With Him is forgiveness even for guilt like thine!" With words like these the angels cheer and comfort poor outcasts, bidding them take heart—since God's mercy is infinite—and tempering heaven's unclouded light to the sad eyes grown weak and dim with long years of prison gloom.

To the same spot the angels brought a poor young mother, carrying her baby. Both had died in fever, and the poor woman could scarce believe the angels who assured her she might rest and be happy here forever. "Thine was a hard life on earth," they reminded her; "hast thou forgotten the blows thy drunken husband gave thee?"

"He did not mean to hurt me," she answered, quickly; "he was really fond of me; it was only when he drank he grew so violent. You would not shut him out of heaven for that?"

The angels looked at each other with a meaning smile, touched by her simple goodness in so soon forgetting the ill treatment she had undergone. Already she was darting from tree to tree, gathering the freshest fruits and holding them to her child's lips.

"See here, my darling, thou hast never tasted fruit like this. And look! There are the angels who came to thee in thy dreams, but far more beautiful; they smile more sweetly still, and their robes are still more white and shining! Look up, my baby, the fever has left us and we are in heaven."

As we journey along on our earthly pilgrimage, one thing alone is clear to each and all of us—the duty that lies straight before us in the present life. So short sighted are we that we often murmur at the hardships that beset us here, not knowing that these are merely stepping-stones whereby to reach our goal. And while we struggle on we should be ever ready to hold out a helping hand to others to bring them, perchance, one step nearer heaven.

THE REIGN OF SILENCE

Silence passed through the forest. It was high noon, and all things slumbered. The birds dozed on the branches, the trees had ceased rustling, the bees were taking a midday nap, the wood-cutters and charcoal-burners had flung themselves down to rest, and the deer lay close in the thicket waiting till the burning heat of the sun should be over. Only the ants went on working noiselessly and industriously as ever; they did not feel the heat, and they required no rest. And Silence continued her way through the forest. She is as straight and tall as a young birch-tree, and very fair, and moves along swiftly, yet with a sweetly serious mien, and the touch of her hand is none the less cool for all the scorching rays of the midsummer sun. She passed along under the tall trees, and the least little movement in their branches died away. For everything felt the power of Silence, though she came so seldom they did not always recognize her at once. Her hair was as golden as the sunbeams, her white garments flashed like the spar-

kling waters of some rippling stream, her eyes had the deep blue of a lake that lies hidden among the mountains, and her lovely lips were often parted in a smile, never in speech. She will not speak, because she knows how little regard men pay to Truth. Some are too lazy even to look for Truth, some too careless to understand it, others will not accept it if it condemns their own revengeful thoughts, others again stifle Truth in their calumnies. So Silence passed on smiling, and thought within herself: "I go my own way quietly and injure none. Alas, that so much harm is wrought by idle words!"

Silence usually dwells with Truth in her palace that is built of rock-crystal, and has hundreds of tubes and speaking-trumpets placed in its walls, so that Truth may always know all that is going on all over the world. She only closes these when she is very tired of listening so much, and then she rests herself with looking out at the stars, or over the glaciers whose snowy purity is so like her own. But nothing rests and refreshes Truth so much as to have Silence come and sit with her, after the fatigue of all she has been obliged to hear. People sometimes think Silence knows very little, and that she does not speak because she has nothing to say, but that is their mistake. She knows more than others,

since she is always listening, and loses no time in talk.

The forest in its noontide stillness is all her own, and there in its very midst stands the glorious ruin of an ancient church, which has become her temple, where she loves to linger. She sits there and dreams for hours of bygone things, and of the things that shall be. No sound disturbs her, no voice breaks in upon her meditation as she waits and watches for the time to be accomplished when Falsehood shall be driven from the world. Falsehood is her great enemy. Being noisy and talkative, the presence of Silence makes her feel ashamed. And Truth begins to have almost as great a horror of human speech as Silence has herself. They know how language is twisted from its meaning and perverted from the service of truth, and made to lend itself to Slander, and to serve as a mask for Error and Fraud. But Truth and Silence understand each other without speaking; they just look into each other's eyes, and then Truth knows all, while not a word is said. Falsehood, with her smooth tongue, steals away men's hearts, so that there is sometimes barely room left anywhere for Truth and Silence. And Falsehood is clothed in costly raiment and hung with jewels, to hide the rags and tatters underneath. If people did but guess

the hideous squalor which that gorgeous attire conceals, they would fly from her in horror, but with her smooth tongue and her finery she deceives them still, until she has them safely in her toils.

It happened one day that Truth had heard how Madam Falsehood seemed to be more busy in the world than ever, and she begged her friend Silence to go out and see how matters really stood. But Silence shrank back in horror from the stir and bustle of the crowded streets, and sought the refuge of her beloved woods. Resting there on a low, ruined wall of the old church, she gazed with her deep, unfathomable eyes into the solitude. All at once the sound of chattering voices broke in on her thoughts, and she fled in disgust deeper into the forest. But the noisy babble reached her there, and she could see that it was her old enemy, Falsehood, leading a little throng of children to the very temple of Silence, and teaching them to speak untruths within those sacred precincts. There sat Madam Falsehood, decked out in all her borrowed gewgaws, telling the little ones that none but fools would dream of speaking the truth; all her life she had never done so, and they might see for themselves how well she had thriven. Silence stepped forward noiselessly, and stood before the blasphemer,

looking hard at her, and in one moment in that terrible, accusing glance, the wretched Falsehood saw all the evil she had ever done pass before her. Nor was she alone in seeing it; the children, also, read the whole truth, and saw the snares she had set for them, and the pitfalls beneath their feet. They knew now that if they continued in her path, soon none would trust them, and that they could not even trust themselves. And all the while there passed before their eyes the long procession of those whom Falsehood had beguiled and had made miserable with her wiles. They told their wrongs, and cursed her for her treachery, persuading them all would go well if they but did her bidding. And she herself writhed and turned livid, as her victims rose and passed before her, an endless train, against the broken wall. And Silence stood and pointed to the spot with pitiless finger, when suddenly and noiselessly the old church began to rise once more from out its ruined foundations, fairer and nobler and more spacious than ever it had been in bygone days. Its roof was the great vault of heaven itself; the forest trees were the columns that supported it; the floor was of crystal, and the walls were red as autumn leaves, and so transparent they shone like rubies, and were reflected in the crystal floor. And all the time there was never a sound, while

the unseen hands went on building, so that the children's hearts stood still for awe, and their eyes were rooted to the spot where Falsehood groveled on the floor, writhing and wringing her hands, imploring Silence to have mercy on her and cease to put her to shame. At last she arose, disheveled and ghastly, and stole out of the temple and down the path that Silence pointed out, and the children, looking on tremblingly, wondered that they could ever have yielded to the blandishments of this foul hag, who gnashed her teeth with impotent rage, and whose gay attire had changed to sordid rags.

When she had gone they breathed more freely, and were able to lift up their eyes and hearts and drink in the marvels that had sprung up around them. They still stood gazing within the temple of Silence, and its unearthly beauty sank into their souls. They felt, also, how her searching glance read all their inmost thoughts; a veil was torn away, and each one knew how often he had been careless, lazy, selfish, mischievous; and all resolved to strive toward better things, and become less unworthy to enter these sacred walls.

While they thought this, it seemed to them the glance of Silence grew kinder and gentler, until all that was reproachful had passed out of

it, so that at last it rested on them as an unspoken benediction. And the glorious sunlight streamed through the transparent walls onto the crystal floor, the lofty tree columns seemed to touch the sky with their waving tops, and with lingering steps the children crossed the threshold, and wandered slowly down the path that led back to their homes.

To their surprise, they found that more than a year had passed since they left. They thought it was that very morning Falsehood had lured them to follow her, but they knew now that she had purposely led them astray, so that they could never have found the way back again had not Silence sought them out and rescued them. Their parents, who had mourned them as lost, were overjoyed to welcome them, and the children comforted their parents still more by telling them how well the time had been spent; they had not wasted it, but had learned lessons that would be profitable to them all their lives. And they spoke truly, and showed that they had been in the school of Silence.

From that time, one never heard from them cross words, sharp answers, unkind mockery, or backbiting; and many who had not been happy formerly, and had thought themselves ill-treated, found that the quiet strength that now was in

them enabled them to overcome their troubles easily. Sometimes they began to wonder in what the power of Silence consists. They recalled how she had looked at them, and had not threatened them, nor punished, nor even scolded, but they had seen and knew how much stronger she was than noisy speech. Now and then they tried to find the way back to her wondrous temple in the woods, but though they always thought they knew the place, the building had vanished. So the whole forest became to them the house of Silence, her sanctuary.

Meanwhile Silence herself lay stretched out in a boat, that bore her across the waters of a deep mountain lake. Her long golden tresses floated behind her, raising tiny ripples as she let herself drift onward with the current, and she gazed down dreamily into the depths below, or out towards the dark, distant shore. The waters were so tranquil that a swan that had just then come swimming up to the boat seemed almost to disturb their calm; but Silence flung her arms around the lovely bird, and others came along, too, and she stroked and caressed them, for they are her favorites, and they understand her, while the cackling ducks and geese are odious to her.

Suddenly her hair was gently pulled, and leaning over the boat's side, Silence beheld a crowd

of nymphs and water-sprites, who smiled and beckoned to her, for they thought she was like themselves, this fair and gentle being, who never spoke, and had no chattering companions to spoil the quiet of their beautiful lake. They, too, always move quietly, and when they sing on moonlight nights their voices are not louder than the breeze that stirs the treetops. So they came around the boat and smiled at Silence, and made signs to her to join them, and she smiled back at them and let herself glide gently as a sleeping child down through their arms to the bottom of the lake.

Deeper and ever deeper they sank to unfathomable depths, where they had to make their way through the tangled masses of luxuriant water-plants, of shapes more varied, and richer colors, than any we see on land. From above, the daylight streaming through the water, as through a crystal dome, shed a subdued golden radiance over all these marvels, as the fair water-maidens glided on, surrounding their new sister. From all sides others came to meet and welcome her, and drawn on in their midst she came to where a lofty palace rose in the middle of the lake. Its towers were so high they seemed to touch the clouds, but so great was the depth they did not even reach half-way to the surface of the lake. It

seemed as if the walls were formed of the waves themselves, for they were clear as crystal, and a low, rippling sound was always heard in them—the dripping of the cold green glacier stream, which flowed right through the lake, and gave the palace the appearance of being built of glacier ice.

As Silence crossed the threshold, her companions watched her curiously to see the impression made on her by the sight so new and strange; and certainly she wondered greatly who might dwell within the dazzling ice palace, and what hands could have collected all the treasures she saw there. But she is not like little children, who if they want to know a thing must always ask at once; for what purpose were her eyes and ears, she thought, if not to learn by. So she waited patiently till all things should unfold their meaning to her. She might well be amazed as she looked around. Innumerable lamps, each formed of a single shell, were suspended by long chains of pearls from a height incalculable; they seemed like huge opals, lighted up by a flame within, and the soft, subdued light was thrown by the massive ice candelabra on all sides. Great mother-of-pearl shells, so smoothly rounded they seemed made for resting in, served as seats and couches. They wandered on through countless halls, each new one more spacious and more richly decorated than

the last, and everywhere shone the same pale green light, and the drops from the ice blocks continued gently splashing. All at once a big wave rolled back from before a doorway, and on a couch of mother of pearl—herself still whiter—Purity, the queen of all these realms, reclined. Silence stood a moment awestruck, half abashed, and bent her knee, but the other stretched her arms out in welcome, and the two fair creatures held one another in a close embrace. Often had Silence wondered to herself where Purity might dwell, and had sought her in her wanderings upon earth, but all she had ever dreamed of was surpassed by this meeting. She thought so little of herself, it seemed to her she was quite unworthy to stand in the presence of this radiant being; and now without a word they understood each other, and she felt as if she would never wish to go elsewhere. The little nymphs looked on delighted, to see what they had brought about, and ages passed without a sound save the rippling of the waves, while Purity and Silence told one another all the secrets in their voiceless speech.

But meanwhile Silence had been missed on earth. Without her, things had gone from bad to worse there, and Truth could hardly hold her own in the fierce struggle against Falsehood, and Fraud, and Error, since she no longer had her

friend with whom to rest from all the noise and talking. So she sent messengers in all directions, and they came to the shores of the lake and asked the nymphs, whom they saw playing in its waters, for news of her they sought. At first the water-maidens would not speak, but in course of time the messengers made them understand they came from a great person. Then they hastened down and informed Silence of all that had taken place in her absence, of the terrible war that had broken out and laid whole countries waste, and that she was longed for to bring peace and quiet after all the riot and confusion.

So with a heavy heart she bade farewell to her dear, new-made friends, and came back to the light of day. But things were sadly changed on earth, and no one knew her. Of the children whom she had once taught many had fallen in battle, and not one remained. Quite a different generation had sprung up, and she felt strange among them. Sadly and wearily she toiled on till she reached the heights where stood the castle of Truth. But even here the babble of tongues and sounds of strife came up from the world below. And Truth herself looked worn and weary; she seemed to have aged, and she had lost all heart to strive to make men better; they were so rough, so wild, she told her friend that it was

a hopeless task. Silence was full of self-reproach when she heard this and saw that Truth had missed her, and that the world had grown so much worse in her absence.

It seemed, indeed, as if no place were left for her; the forests were cut down, so she could not recognize any of her old haunts; a robber band had taken up their abode in the beautiful ruin; everything seemed desecrated. Only the quiet resting-places of the dead were unmolested. She would linger round the tombs, thankful that this refuge had at least been spared, out of so much she once might call her own. Elsewhere all was confusion, lawlessness, and license. In all this turmoil and unrest, Silence thought with longing of the cool, quiet place under the clear waters of the lake, and of her who dwelt there, Purity, who scarcely dares to show herself on earth, since she would stifle in the air we breathe.

At first Silence scarcely knew how she would set about her work, how make her influence felt, in all this uproar. In their disputes and quarrels, men had no time to learn, no time to think. They were not merely ignorant: they had no wish to learn; they were contented so long as, with big, blustering voices and strong arm, they could obtain the things they wanted. They seemed to have entirely forgotten there had once been days



Silence set her little foot upon its head.



when the birds sang in the trees and children played in the green fields, and all things seemed young and happy. Now two hideous monsters, Hate and Revenge, had taken up their abode in the world, and seemed to rule it. Hate was a fiery dragon; Revenge a serpent with a hundred coils. The winged dragon, Hate, flew through the air, laying whole districts waste, burning and destroying with its pestilential breath; and the serpent of Revenge crept along over the whole earth at lightning speed, and those who escaped its venomous fangs were crushed and stifled in its deadly coils. It was horrible to see the devastation wrought by these foul monsters.

But Silence felt no fear. She went her way, and cast no glance at either of them, while they disputed whose prey she should be. They thought they would make easy work of one weak girl, and the dragon darted down upon her from the sky and tried to scorch her with his fiery eyes; but as she looked back at him with her calm, steadfast gaze, without a quiver of the eyelids, the fire was quenched, and the great, unwieldy creature grew weaker and weaker. Then Revenge came creeping along, hissing, and just prepared to spring. But Silence set her little foot upon its head, and underneath that light tread the horrid creature might twist and turn—

it was powerless to harm. The monsters could not understand that they, who had kept all mankind in fear and dread so long, should be defeated thus. But none came to their assistance, and they felt that the quiet strength of Silence was much greater than their own.

Silence had conquered, but she could not kill them nor drive them altogether from the world. During her long absence they had grown so big and strong, from feasting well, and preying on all around them, that all she could do was to crush their strength and curb their venomous fury, so that they might not continue to lay the whole world waste. So they slunk away, not daring to raise their horrid heads, and hid themselves in lonely caverns, whence they only sally forth from time to time at nightfall.

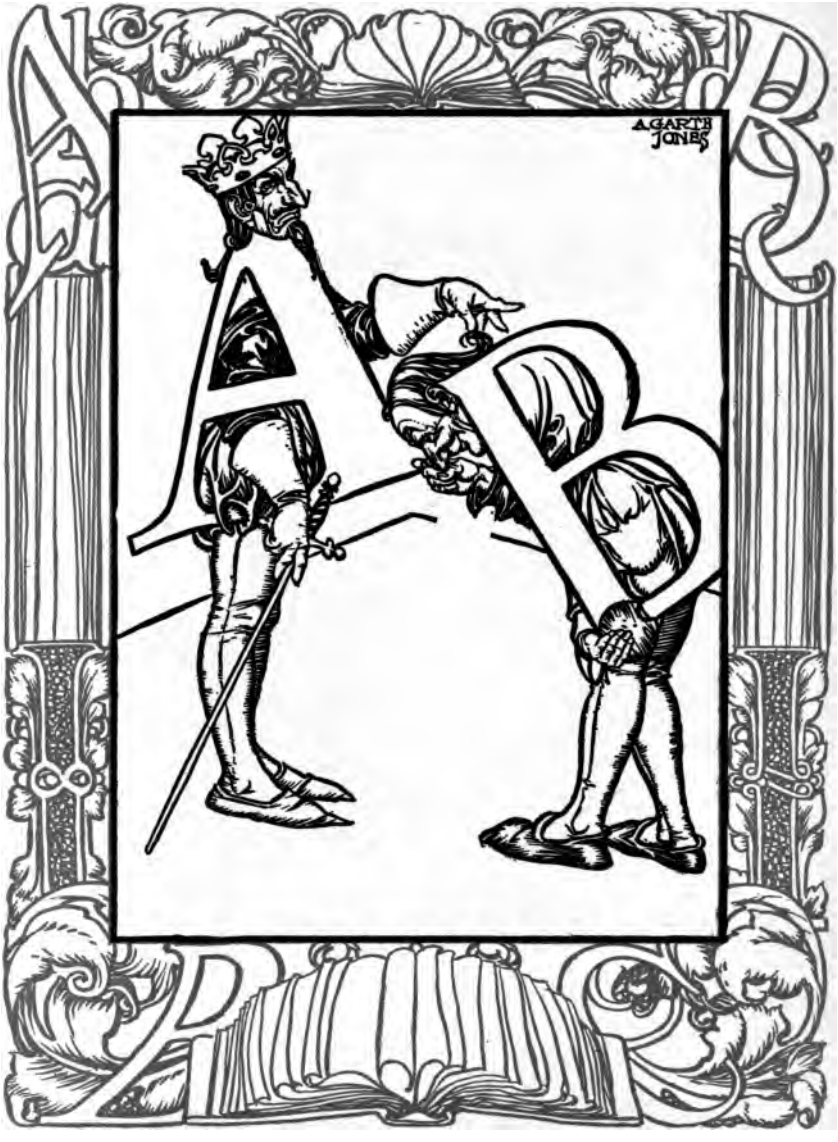
Thus did Silence begin her work, by setting men free from their direst foes. And she made her home once more in their midst, and went among them, and her influence spread, little by little, for men in truth were sick of wrangling and brawling, and hailed with delight the gentle presence that brought them peace. Even the stillness of Night had been broken by their angry clamor, and Sleep no longer visited their weary eyelids till Silence came to close them. Silence is the best of comforters. She lays her

fingers on the lips of Death and takes away his horrors, and Life's hard-fixed look on the dear dead features passes at that tender touch. Her stronghold is among the dead; there she will linger, biding her time in case the living should once more drive her from their midst. And mortals in their direst anguish raise their eyes to the Towers of Silence, and pray for her return to rule the world.

A REVOLUTION IN THE DICTIONARY

I had fallen asleep over my Latin dictionary. That indeed happened fairly often to me, when I had been at work since four in the morning, and had still to prepare Horace or Ovid late at night. Then my eyes would close and my head sink forward on the nice thick dictionary, that dear old Latin dictionary by Georges, in which, besides the Latin and the German words there were so many Greek words as well, that I had learned to decipher the Greek characters and read the words all by myself just by comparing them with the others. But sleep often overpowered me, because I really worked too hard and too long—from early morning to close on midnight. It was not surprising, therefore, that I should sometimes take the dictionary for a nice, soft pillow, and go to sleep quite comfortably with my head resting on it.

But on this one occasion something very extraordinary took place. All sorts of strange, fantastic ideas were always flitting through my



"I am the monarch, and you are my subjects."



youthful brain, so that even when awake I was constantly dreaming, and in my sleep the extravagant fancies of my fifteen years had it all their own way. And on the evening I speak of it seemed to me that I heard voices close in my ear—voices that at first spoke quite in whispers, and then grew every moment louder and clearer, and more eager and excited from inside the big book under my head.

"No, no, no! Not at all! Nothing of the sort! I am the principal person in the whole book, I tell you! I am the Capital A, on whom everything depends. But for me you would none of you be there! I am the monarch, and you are my subjects, that is quite clear!"

"Of course it is," said B, with what was intended for a graceful bow, but did not turn out very well, on account of his bent back. He was big and burly, and should have been bold and brave, but had grown so fond of his bed, and also of bread-and-butter, he only asked not to be disturbed. So he smiled benignly, and took another big bite out of a bun, the best thing in the world, he boasted.

D and L cast longing glances across the page at one another. They had many tastes in common, both liking everything that was delicate and diaphanous, and light and limpid, and wher-

ever they could come together they were always to be found leaning in dreamy attitudes, or locked and linked in a despairing embrace. E was never tired of laughing at them, exclaiming: "There they are as usual, our languishing darlings, with their 'loves and doves,' and all the rest of their nonsense! No other letters in the Alphabet give themselves such airs as just those two, not even acknowledging A's claims to precedence. They pretend he has fallen into his dotage, and is only fit for baby language, simply because the smallest children, who can only make inarticulate sounds, have no difficulty in pronouncing his name!"

F came up at full speed, fleet-footed and fierce, with his feather flying in the air. He flung himself about, flouting the others. "Who dare face me?" he fumed. "What fellow among you knows so fearless a friend or foe? I fence and fight, and use my fists, and am first in every fray! Fire-eater shall be my name, and 'Forward!' my motto!"

"Fiddle-de-dee!" said a grave voice, in tones of well-bred disgust, and G came forward with his grand air, smiling graciously to right and left. "Will that vulgar brawler forever disturb our peace?" he gasped. "How can people of sense and refinement tolerate this upstart? This buf-

foon, with his dangling sword and his peacock's feathers, would lord it over his betters! The truly great are modest, and I would take no glory to myself, because my father was a Spanish grandee and my mother a great lady. But since we are too often judged by our garb, I drag this trailing mantle after me to show my rank, and gaze through this gold-rimmed glass at the gaping crowd."

"Good! very good!" laughed H. "Have it all your own way, by all means. But just tell me, if you please, how could any of you get along without me. I am the breath that calls you all into being, that sighs in the softest whisper. I am in the mighty 'Hurrah!' that echoes through some great host, and in the 'hush of death!' Without me there could be no hope, no harmony—humanity would have neither head to plan nor hand to execute, and its great heart would be silenced! I am in the home and at the hearth, and no happiness would be complete without me!"

"Nonsense!" said A, drawing himself up to his full height. "I tell you once more that I am your leader and your ruler. It is my birthright. Do I not come first in every alphabet. As for poor H, he is a mere parvenu, and is only tolerated among us, for if the truth were

known he is not a letter at all—nothing but an aspirate!"

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed H, and seemed so much amused that A turned his back, still more offended, and would take no further notice of him. Just then I came dancing along, dragging J after her. J hung back with all his might, and refused to dance, but it was all no use. I turned and twirled and twisted like a whirligig, and took the greatest liberties with every one. She sat down on A's knee, without any regard for his royal rank, and pulled G's hair, with equal disregard for his dignity and grandeur, and filliped F's nose, and then tumbled up against B's burly form, and made fun of C for her chameleon-like complexion, changing color every moment, counterfeiting now S, now K, now Z, showing that she had no real character of her own; amusing in her impertinence, and her wild fits of laughter had such a joyous ring that the others could not long be offended with her, and joined in her mirth.

But poor J sat on the ground, gesticulating and launching his jeremiads against his madcap sister, with whom he insisted he had nothing in common. "Some folks treat us as if we were twins!" he exclaimed, jerking his words out indignantly. "But whatever we may have been once,

we are no longer alike. How should I, who never wish to make myself talked about, resemble that tall, thin May-pole of a girl, pirouetting everywhere on one leg, just to force people to notice her? And then they are ill-natured enough to say that I am only jealous, and would like to be mistaken for her! Such injustice might really make one ill!"

And J looked as if he were about to have an attack of jaundice, when G suddenly tapped him on the shoulder. "Try to be a little less of a bore," he said. "Nobody cares a pin who or what you are, nor to know whether you are sometimes taken for your sister. For my part, I rather prefer her, since she does not interfere with me, whilst there are ignorant people who grow confused between the sound of G and J, and pretend not to know us apart! Can they not see the difference between a gentleman born and this jester, this juggler, who has only crept into society on the strength of his resemblance to the I?" "We had quite enough of her by herself," went on G, raising his voice a little, so as to be heard by the Greek letters—"enough, and too much!" There are languages in which Madam I plays nowadays such a prominent part, the other vowels cannot be heard at all, and are all

content to be called I, whatever their real name may be, just to pay her a compliment and live under her protection."

During G's speech, K went striding past with his long legs, eying the group askance. G returned the glance disdainfully. "There is another I dislike," he grumbled. "Was there ever anything more awkward than that walk, as stiff as a stork's, and the long, lanky back and legs, like spindle-shanks!"

"I ask your kind permission," began K, but G would not let him finish the sentence.

"I have just come back from a long journey—a journey in Greece," he went on to say, when there was a momentary lull in the conversation. "Yes, I have traveled to the very end of this book—this big book, that contains the whole world, as is known to you all; and the result of my personal observation—"

But what the result of K's own personal observation was nobody was ever destined to know, for at that moment the orator was run into by M, who was pursuing O, trying to persuade him to be quiet, and not shriek quite so loud, if anything did not please him. M really acts as a sort of amateur policeman, standing so firmly on his own feet that nothing can move him, and looking like a big mound, behind which the weak can hide

themselves. M is never very quick in his movements, and marches about majestically, as he thinks, but in reality rather clumsily, and therefore often tumbles over the rest. Now, when the great mass rolled up against K, entangling his long legs, and quite spoiling the effect of his learned speech, K was furious, and broke out into very strong expressions against the monstrous breach of manners. But M was perfectly unconscious of having done any mischief, and continued his maneuvers to meet with O, who meanwhile, having escaped his mentor, was shouting and roaring, and with his big, round mouth opened to its widest extent, "O! O! O!" he called out at everything that was said. Not a word of sense could the others obtain from him, and the noise was so deafening, they employed M to find some means of silencing the uproar. But it was all very well for the latter to put himself in front of O, and hold up his finger menacingly, "M! M! M! M!" O had no inclination at the present moment to let the damper be applied to his voice, so he laughed in M's face, and howled the louder. He had just caught sight of K's long legs, and heard the long words he used, and was tremendously impressed by such a display of erudition and knowledge of the world. That had quite escaped poor, dull old M's short-sighted eyes; he was so

often taken up with his mission as inspector of morals, he could not see that the others only tolerated him because he was well-meaning, and sometimes useful to restore order, being mute.

A cross-grained looking, stiff-necked letter, with his nose in the air, made his way through the disputants. "Good morning, N! Come and dance with me!" cried I, gayly.

"No!" answered N, and went on his way with his little narrow steps."

"Come and walk with me! We can keep very well in step!" said K, good-humoredly. It was not in the least true, for N certainly could not take such long steps as K, but the latter would have liked to see him in a good temper for once. But N only repeated his "No!" and passed on.

G accosted him graciously: "We two should suit one another very well, for we are both of noble lineage, and look down on the rest of the world."

"No!" again said N, in a tone of still more annoyance. He knew how often G hung on to him, and the trouble he had to pull him along, when for his own part, all he wanted was to go on denying everything that every one else said.

"Approach!" said A, with his most regal air. "I am your sovereign, and you cannot refuse me obedience." M began to push N forward, mur-

muring "M! M! M! M!—you must! you m-m-m-must!" But N turned away from him, saying "No!" in his usual surly tone, and then took up his position in a corner, from whence he scowled defiance at all the other letters who dared to approach him, saying "No!" before he had heard what they wished to ask him! There he stood—an eternal negation—with his solemn, puritanical face! Perhaps he would have liked to say "Yes!" sometimes, but his lips had become so accustomed to denials, they seemed no longer able to shape anything beyond "Nothing" and "Never," "Nobody," "Nowhere," "None!" He always flew into a great rage when he heard how some nations gave him a soft, melting pronunciation, saying this showed a weakness quite unworthy of his character!

P was a little like him in some points, for though he was not always denying like N, he was always protesting, which comes to much the same thing. He was a very learned professor, one of the sort who would have made the whole world look at everything through his own spectacles, and who himself never took a journey, lest he should fall under foreign influences, insisting that all he required for pleasure and profit were to be had without crossing his own doorstep. As for wandering through the dictionary to pick up in-

formation, his pride revolted against such a plan. The Greek characters were all antiquated, he persisted, while the German were utterly artificial, the product of an age of decadence! He declined all transactions with either party! But as he approached N, protesting, N called out from the distance, "No! No! No!" so energetically, the professor stopped in some surprise. "Permit me to inquire—" he began, politely. "Surely you would not deny the perspicacity I have displayed in dealing with these interesting problems."

"No!" said N with a more nasal twang, and knitting his brow more nervously than ever.

"Then we are of the same mind?"

"N-n-n-n-n-no!" shouted N, so furiously this time that P saw nothing was to be made of him, and prudently withdrew. He turned to the others to see if his perpetual protestations and contradictions would be more amiably received elsewhere.

K cut him short politely: "I tell you, my good fellow, I have just come back from Greece, and have made my own observations. I have the evidence of my own senses to go upon!"

"Such evidence is most misleading," pleaded the professor. "How often have I made the statement that I deny myself the pleasures of travel lest my convictions should be biased by these pernicious practical arguments. My personal

proficiency furnishes me with all the proofs I seek!"

This was too much for K and he rushed away as far as he could, confiding to all he met that P was the most outrageous prig and pedant he had ever seen, and far more insufferable than that ill-tempered fellow N.

Q was generally to be seen toddling along by the side of U and holding to her skirts for fear of falling down. She seemed to be quite a child still, and U was always watching over her and taking care of her, and helping her over any difficulties in the way. Alone, Q looked quite helpless and awkward, so that the others paid no attention to her, and had grown into the habit of always consulting U and asking after Q's health, and anything else they wanted to know about her. Q could not even ask a question without U's help, and U gave such a mysterious and confidential air to all she said, she was the duenna whom every one trusted on account of her tact and discretion.

R seemed more restless than all his companions. He was the born inventor and explorer, a rover and a runner, first in every raid and every race. Railways were his work, for he loved all rapid motion, and he was at home in war and rapine, and in earthquake and in storm. He

seemed always to be raging and rushing along, and his words rolled and rattled from the lips like rippling water.

Behind the hurricane R came S, the soul of secrecy and silence, sighing as softly as the summer breeze. She was so sedate, so slim and noiseless, she often passed unnoticed; but she was so sure and steadfast also, she never let herself be surprised into longer speech than the one sound "S!" Sometimes she stood like a sentinel before T, who was himself a tower, so solid and strong. T liked best to come at the end of a word, or syllable, or sentence; then he was in his element, setting a limit and pointing out the way. There was something hard and trenchant in his attitude, and he was the only person who had any liking for N, perhaps chiefly on account of the "not" they were always forming together, to contradict any one who had set his heart on anything.

V and W were a great contrast to T. Their natures were soft and yielding, and W was so weak and wavering, it was often thought he had no real character at all, and only borrowed his from V, whose walk and ways he tried to imitate. He always pretended to be very nearly related to her, but few people believed that, for her ancient lineage could not be called in question, while with regard to W, nobody felt very certain where he had

sprung from, and although in England and Germany he had obtained the right of citizenship, none of the old aristocratic families would admit him among them. And as for his worth, they pointed out that while he looked like V's double, he also mimicked U so closely that he might be taken for her shadow, and had evidently not made up his mind as to the part he would like to play. He was nothing but a weather cock blown about by the wind they said, but W was well aware what he himself wanted, and watched and waited, with his mouth wide open, for whatever might drop into it to suit his wishes. V took no part in his wiles and his whisperings, and her own personal value could not suffer by any variations. But her position had been affected by events; at one time she and U had been so closely connected, they were considered almost identical, and now-a-days in some countries V had taken to imitating her with such success she was often pushed from her place by him. She was nowhere so happy as in Italy, for there she was held in great honor, and still plays a very important part.

X had been bow-legged from infancy, and this had perhaps given a crook to all his thoughts and feelings, for he certainly had an exceptional way of looking at things—was always in extremes and excelled in fault-finding, as if he were at cross pur-

poses with the rest of the world. He was in any case a very eccentric person, with his extravagant way of finding things either too primitive or too modern, and never having been truly at his ease in Spain and in Greece.

As for Y he was altogether a Greek, and had never settled down in France or Germany, but had wandered in disguise into England and the Scandinavian countries, and taken up his abode there.

Perhaps no letter had had stranger, more amazing vicissitudes than Z. He had been so much ill-used, treated as if he were now hard, now soft, that he seemed to have grown a little doubtful himself as to his real nature, and was one moment full of zeal, while the next his spirits sank to zero. And such indecision, his comrades remarked, inspired but little confidence in one who claimed the post of honor, to bring up the rear guard of their forces. They fancied Z no longer knew his own true meaning, and they had grown suspicious as to his intentions, accusing him of being chiefly zealous in mischief-making, and entering with the greatest zest into quarrels and strife. He really did once go so far as to attack quiet, peaceable S, pretending that she was encroaching on his territories, but S only smiled and slipped silently past him.



P tried to persuade his companions to throw off the tyrannous yoke.



Over and over again P, who was somewhat of a philosopher, and prided himself on being a republican in politics, had tried to persuade his companions to throw off the tyrannous yoke that compressed them into words of human invention. It was time for them to be independent, he urged, and show what they were capable of when uninterfered with; they should come together just as suited themselves and make a language quite incomprehensible to men, and such as had not been heard on earth before. When G heard this he was so agitated he summoned M to come and help him to crush the scandal, pointing out the terrible danger to good manners and morals should P's project prevail. O, who overheard them, opened his eyes wider than ever, and at once confided his observations under an oath of secrecy to U, who, with less than her usual prudence, told all the other letters in turn, urging them to unite in pursuit of this utopian ideal.

All the letters were enchanted with the proposal, and eager for the plot, but not one of them had any practical suggestion to make with regard to a new language, and each one wished his neighbor to begin—he would be quite ready to follow—and would lend the scheme his very best support.

Somebody suggested that, according to all

rules of precedence, it should be B's business to lead the way. But this was a bad beginning, for B was at breakfast, and only begged not to be bothered. He smiled blandly, stroking his beard, but when they told him their intention of breaking their bonds, he burst out with his objections to bloodshed and brute force, and besought them to beware, lest they should bring about an unbearable state of things for the whole brotherhood. Beyond this not a word could be brought out of him, and this selfish and unpatriotic behavior so aroused K's indignation, he was inclined to assume the leadership at once, and proclaim war to the knife to bring matters to a climax. All commended K's knightly conduct, and many concluded that he was better fitted to be their king than A, whose age and apathy were so much against him. But others were not of this opinion; indeed, now that the letters began to discuss their form of government, and insist on revising the constitution, it seemed that there were not two of them who thought alike, so that a scene of the most extraordinary confusion took place — the strangest sight I had ever witnessed in my life. All the letters in the dictionary began running and rushing about, as if they had suddenly gone mad; not one stayed quietly in his place, but each shouted at the top of its voice, trying to

drown what the others said. Whenever one appeared to be getting the upper hand, then the rest united at once to crush him, and no sooner had they done so than they set to work quarreling among themselves. Poor A tried for a time to keep up his kingly dignity by not letting himself be mixed up in the disturbance, but all his efforts to keep clear of it were of no avail; he was swept away in the shrieking, gesticulating crowd, with his few faithful followers rallying round him. In the midst of the tumult one could distinguish some of the new words produced by the unexpected juxtaposition of letters, and some advanced thinkers and revolutionary enthusiasts rejoiced at this, as a forecast of the language of the future, betokening real progress at last. But the words they formed in this manner were in truth most ridiculous, and the sounds so uncouth and hideous that even Volapuk itself, the silliest of all human inventions, was scarcely more frightful or more foolish.

But the confusion grew even worse when all the letters of one sort began to band together in little parties, so that all the A's in the lexicon were in one group, vociferating and brandishing their arms against the innumerable other groups, formed by similar association of letters. Nor was this all; after some moments of this party warfare,

war on a larger and more terrific scale was organized, by the league of all the letters in each language against those of the rival tongues, so that individual quarrels and family feuds developed into a veritable war of races and of nations. The three armies, formed by the Latin, Greek, and German alphabets, marched out against one another in battle array, and several encounters took place, with terrible slaughter. The Greek letters, being numerically the weakest, were the soonest routed, though they defended themselves with the greatest valor, and I was struck by their individual superiority over their adversaries, since those who fell or were driven from the field were always singly more than a match for any of their foes, and it took at least two of the modern letters to overcome them. The Latin and German forces displayed scarcely less animosity one for the other; they hacked and hewed each other mercilessly, and the field of battle was soon strewn with corpses, and with the severed limbs of the poor, maimed letters. I thought if the fighting went on much longer, there would be very little left of any of the alphabets—all three would be exterminated.

Indeed the combatants were falling on all sides, exhausted, but not in the least disposed to surrender, for each would have spent his last strength in the effort to make his voice heard

above the din, and as they no longer considered themselves bound by any rules of speech, but each indulged in whatever jargon suggested itself to him, the noise was not only deafening, but incomprehensible. It was not till they were literally worn out and could shout no longer that a lull took place, in which the desperate situation could be realized. H, who had been among the most violent, had suffered less than any one, for it seems that his lungs will bear any strain upon them, and he kept the breath in his body while all the others were gasping and panting around him. So he now came to their assistance, blowing life into them, and setting them upon their feet once more. Even the corpses were reanimated, and the scattered members blown together again. But they were all very limp and feeble just at first, and looked from one to the other wondering what to begin next. They felt slightly ashamed to have made so much ado, all to no purpose, for they quite well realized that they were no better off for the hard words and blows they had exchanged. R then made the unfortunate remark to his neighbor S that no revolution can be complete without an execution, and although S was silent as usual, the words were caught up and whispered from one to the other, and every one began to ask who should be the

victim. The general opinion was that as A had been king, it would be according to precedent that he should be beheaded, but there was the objection that A had no head to cut off, and so they looked about for a substitute. On looking round, most of them agreed that P had a head admirably adapted for the purpose, and the prospect of this unusual spectacle gave so much satisfaction that general good humor was restored. M was called upon to be executioner, and although he insisted that was not his office, that he was merely a magistrate, his remonstrances were not listened to, and he was menaced with maltreatment by the mob, should he maintain his refusal. There was a mock trial, in which B was in favor of banishment, supported by O, who thought, however, ostracism had a finer sound; but whatever votes were taken, V always came forward with her veto to counteract them. A scaffold was erected, and X supplied an axe, with which M, much against his will, chopped off his prisoner's head. The deed was no sooner accomplished than K began to protest, condemning the chief actors in the scene, accusing them of cruelty, while they connived at the escape of the real criminals. But K had not the key to the situation, and his knowledge and eloquence could not appease the angry passions kindled in the crowd. All P's

kith and kin were dragged to the scaffold, and the whole race might have perished but for the timely interference of H, who hurried to the rescue, holding over the heads of all concerned so vigorous a threat of cutting off their powers of speech, they stopped, thinking the revolution had gone quite far enough, and that it was time to make an end of it, lest it should injure them. P was put together again, and some were even for offering him the crown, to make up for the loss of his head. P declined on his own behalf, under the plausible pretext that recent events had given him a distaste for public affairs, but in recognition of H's great services, he proposed him as the only worthy candidate for royal honors. H, however, had not the smallest wish to become king; so as A had been forced to abdicate, and there seemed to be nobody to replace him, on R's instigation a republic was proclaimed, to the great delight of K, whose Greek proclivities made him consider this the ideal form of government. So peace was restored and the letters went back one by one to the dictionary, where I could find the words I wanted once more in their old places, without having to trouble my head to learn new languages much more difficult than any of the old ones, because they would have owed their origin to nothing but caprice and would have had no solid foundation.

When I awoke and lifted my head from the dictionary I was almost surprised to find it lying there so quietly, with no sounds of discussion and argument issuing from its depths. I opened it and all the letters were in their proper places, as orderly and well arranged as possible. They little thought that I had watched them, listened to their wrangling, and witnessed their foolish quarrels. For them I was something too vague and far away to be interested in their proceedings, and when I turned the pages in search of a word they thought they were merely being tossed about by blind Fate, like those human beings who find it hard to believe that Providence is really troubled about their concerns, and who wonder why they are driven hither and thither, when the answer is so simple. But that is just the way of the world!

CARMEN SYLVA

I have very often been asked how I came to take the name of Carmen Sylva as my nom de plume.

When I was small no one knew much about electricity and there were no telegrams at all. Then all the news was brought by messengers on horseback. All at once in the middle of the night one would hear the post-horn sounding, first quite in the distance, then gradually drawing nearer, and the estafette, as he was called, in his uniform, with his high, yellow hat, pulled up before the house, and there was great excitement, especially if he were the bearer of a letter from the king, for those letters might not be kept waiting; they had to be carried on night and day until they reached their destination.

There were hardly any lucifer matches when I was a little girl. I remember still how, in my grandmother's house, there was a little machine dipped in some liquid, on which one pressed to make a flame. And in the nursery we had neither wax nor composite candles, those were

only for the drawing-room. We, however, had tallow candles, which constantly required trimming with the snuffers, and it was a great amusement to try to snuff the light without extinguishing it.

There were so few railways at that time that I have traveled almost all over Germany with horses. I had a little, tiny chair fastened high up in the window of my parents' traveling carriage so that I could look out all the time, and then I would stretch my little curly head out of the window and call to the postilion: "Post-boy, blow your horn!" And then he put the horn to his lips and blew a lively tune. When the horses were tired we stopped in any strange place and changed horses and postilion. And the new postilion always had a new tune he could play.

When my mother was a child the first steamer was seen on the Rhine, and those who had not yet seen it refused to believe it, and said, mockingly: "There will be steamers going on land next." They thought the idea too absurd, not knowing how soon there would be railways everywhere.

I passed my childhood in the forest amidst the loveliest beech forest trees standing far higher than the castle, and growing so close up to it that their shadows fell across the threshold. From my window I so often imitated the cry of the cuckoo

or the wood pigeons that they would fly quite near, and call louder and louder, growing quite angry at the strange bird.

Sometimes on an autumn evening we went after dusk with a dark lantern into the woods to a most beautiful spot, from which in the daytime there was the loveliest view, to hear the stags bay. It is the most impressive sound—a sort of deep, drawn-out roar, broken by fitful starts—as it is taken up by one fierce magnificent creature after the other, and they answer one another defiantly from all the hillsides round, till the whole forest rings with the challenge. We did not speak, we hardly dared to breathe, and the lantern, too, had to be muffled, so that only the moonbeams falling aslant the boughs and bushes lighted up the scene. It was almost uncanny to hear the mighty voices echoing through the night, and if they came too near I sometimes crept a little closer to my father's side, and clutched at his hand in the darkness, lest a stag should bear down upon me, for it really sounded as if they were coming straight at one. One must not make the slightest sound, because the stags have such quick hearing they would notice it in the midst of their own tremendous baying, and they would stop at once or go much further off.

In autumn, too, both hoot owls and screech

owls were to be heard close round the castle at night, and often when a little owl screeched my mother has come running into the nursery thinking it was one of us children crying.

And on the moonlight nights in winter the hares would come up to the very door, and sit on their hind legs in the snow and play together.

The squirrels, too, were on the best of terms with us. They came quite near because they were so inquisitive. Once one of them, holding a nut between its sharp little teeth, ran right up against my father, and when it saw itself reflected in his boot, it was very much surprised, and stopped for a long time to contemplate itself in the polished leather. But at last my father made a little movement, and it turned tail and fled at full speed.

Birds I had by hundreds at my windows, for I fed them through the whole winter. For that reason I could never bear to have a caged bird. Had I not the whole wood full of birds if I wanted any? They came boldly into my room, or tapped on the window-pane outside with their little beaks to remind me of my duty, if they found nothing to eat. And the twittering and the fluttering, and the singing, and the piping. How pretty it all was! Many of them I knew quite well. I could tell which were the more imperti-



With my two St. Bernard dogs I would race through the forest."

nent and which were the more timid of all the blackbirds, thrushes, linnets, robins, tomtits, and finches, and whatever the rest of them might be called. How they pushed one another in their haste to peck the crumbs. I gave them bread and butter, too, and nuts and almonds. Ah! it was a pretty sight. The window is still there at which I fed them, and the same wild vine still twines itself around it, although it is thirty years I have been away.

Now it can be imagined how much the forest told me, especially on my solitary walks. The storm-wind was a special friend of mine. When it made the oaks and the beeches sway and groan, sawing the branches asunder till they came crashing down, then I would tie my little hood over my brown hair, and with my two big St. Bernard dogs by my side, I would race through the forest, avoiding all the beaten tracks, and listen to its voices; for the forest told me stories all the time. The forest sang the songs to me, which I wrote down afterward at home, but which I never showed to any one. It was our secret—the woods and mine. We kept it to ourselves. No one else should know the songs we sang together, we two, for no one else would understand them as we did. But the songs poured from my pen, and if my thoughts do but go back to the woods, again

they come, like a far-off greeting from my childhood's days.

How often have I flung my arms round a tree to embrace it, and kissed the rough bark, for if my fellow-creatures thought me too wild and impetuous, the forest never did. The trees never complained that my young arms hugged them too violently, or that I was too noisy when I sang my songs at the top of my voice. For I could never think my songs to myself unsung. I sang them over and over again, hundreds of times, and always to new melodies.

Flowers I scarcely ever gathered. I am much too fond of them, and should have been afraid of hurting them. And then the flowers also talked to me; fox-gloves that were almost as tall as I, and shepherd's staff—royal taper it is called in Germany—that grew to twice my height, with its broad, velvety leaves and rich, dead-gold blossoms; campanulæ of all sizes—every sort of flower, great and small, down to the tiny, little, blood-red pimpernel. I still know the exact spot where the finest specimens of each kind grew.

Then there were ponds in the middle of the wood, that looked as if they were little pieces cut out of the sky, and fitted into the ground there.

The dead leaves had a special music of their own, as they crackled beneath my tread, when,

with the tip of my toe, I made them fly whirling and eddying up into the air. How glorious that was! No royal mantle ever rustled in such fashion; but then, this was the mantle of His Majesty, the Forest!

Within the forest the ground itself has a peculiar tone; it almost echoes back when one treads firmly, as if it were hollow underneath. This made me wonder to myself what might not be living down there. And I lay down in the moss to watch the ants and other little insects at their work. It seemed to me as if they all knew me. Never have I been stung by a wasp or bee. Even in the very worst summer for wasps, when, in lunching out of doors, our table was covered with them, and every one else was stung, they never hurt me. The blind-worms, too, were great friends of mine. If one talks to them in a low voice, they lift their heads and look at one so intelligently with their bright little golden eyes. And the lovely glow-worms! How often in the season when they abound, on our way home through the forest in the evening, after some long excursion, have I picked up several of these star-like little creatures, and placed them in my hair. They flashed and sparkled round my head in the days when I possessed no other diadem, and never has one made of diamonds pleased me so

well as that formed by these living jewels, which I always carefully replaced in the grass before they lost their brilliancy; for if one keeps them too long, the light grows dim—the little lamp no longer burns. I think it is that they are sad at being carried so far away, for their lamp is nothing but a love-signal which they light to let their true-lover know where his little lady-love is to be found. And then thoughtless beings carry them off, and the poor true-lover waits and waits in vain for the signal, and the little lady-love pines away! And there again one sees how much cleverer such little creatures are than any of us. It took men centuries and centuries to find out such a light as this, and then they call it electricity. These little insects found it out by love, and give it no name at all!

I have lovely woods, also, here in Roumania, but fir-trees are mixed with the other trees, and there are no lofty, spacious beech avenues, like the aisles of a Gothic cathedral, as in my woods beside the Rhine. And quite a different set of wild animals—bears, lynxes, chamois, eagles, and moor-fowl—inhabit these forests. It is almost another world here, but very beautiful, nevertheless.

I was once laughed at for saying in one of my stories that in May the leaves of the beech

are so shining the blue sky is reflected in them. They are covered then with a delicate, silvery bloom, and if one wants to paint them one must put on a coating of gum-lac to obtain the same brilliant effect. Often and often have I observed how the sky was mirrored in the young beech leaves.

Then what enthusiasm was mine at seeing the splendors of the autumn foliage reflected in the Weidbach, making the whole stream run liquid gold. Gold overhead, gold under foot, gold everywhere—but not the gold that calls forth human greed. This gold seemed to have a pink reflection, a roseate haze, so that the atmosphere of the yellow beechwood was actually rose-colored. And how delicious it all smelled! That is regal splendor before which all the splendors of a court—rich dresses, blaze of jewels and of lights—turn pale and fade! I could never take much pleasure in pomp and parade, for human pomp always seemed to me so unutterably poor and insignificant beside the glories of God's own halls of state, raised on pillars of the stately trees, whose ever-changing colors adorn them continually anew!

I must not forget the spider's webs. I do not suppose many of my readers have been as often as I have, in the woods at sunrise, to

see the spider's webs hung with dew. If you have not seen that, then you have never seen any *real* chains of diamonds! No ballroom ever held half so lovely a sight as a spider's web full of dewdrops sparkling in the sunlight! Every delicate little thread, however fine, is spangled with diamonds that take all the colors of a prism, as they catch the first rays of the morning sun.

Instead of ropes of pearls I had the whole ground at my feet smothered in lilies-of-the-valley. Oh, what an exquisite scent they gave! For rubies, there were the young leaves of the copper-beech, glowing red as the sun shone through them. And as for emeralds, why, the whole forest was full of them! No, I have never been able to take pleasure in precious stones, because they are always the same—so cold and lifeless! Flowers are much, much more beautiful. And when I saw the copper-beech turn almost black, as though it draped itself in mourning garments because the spring was over, and then when it grew green again, just when all the other trees were changing to red and green and yellow, ah, that was something worth living for!

The linden tree was one of my great favorites, and it told me its story one day because I begged so to hear it.



Each angel took a separate leaf and pulled it hard.



It was at first only quite an ordinary tree; it had no perfume, its leaves were nothing remarkable, and nobody took the slightest notice of it. So it begged that God would take pity on it and endow it with some special gift like all the rest—some having lovelier blossoms, others stronger fragrance, some leaves that rustled melodiously, others denser shade, while still others gave refuge to great swarms of bees and birds. Thus the linden tree put up her prayer, telling her wrongs. And God listened compassionately, saw her complaint was justified, and made answer: "'Tis true, my hand has been perchance more sparing in its gifts toward thee than toward thy sister trees, but I will compensate thee now. Thou shalt henceforth be fragrant, and have leaves such as no other tree can boast of, and they shall rustle to thy heart's content, and all thy branches shall be full of bees and birds, and all thou couldst wish for shall be granted thee, because thou hast borne thy homeliness uncomplainingly so many, many years."

And in that self-same night the angels came. They came in hosts, all round the linden tree. First they took the leaves, and pulled at them. Each angel took a separate leaf and pulled it hard, fluttering his wings, just as the birds pull when they want to tear a piece of wool out from a hedge,

or a hair from off my head, to make a nice, soft bed for their children in the nest! They tug, and tug, and flutter their wings, and make the most terrible exertions. Just in the same way did the little angels flutter, and strive, and strain, until they had drawn the leaves out to thrice their former size. Then they took their paint brushes and paints—their little jars of color were slung round their waists, and for brushes they had pulled a few feathers from the birds' tails—and they set to work to silver the inside of the broad leaves, so that it might never be gloomy in the linden shade. The effect was splendid—on the one side the soft, warm green, and underneath the delicate silver, that showed itself with the quivering leaf at the least breath of wind. And as the colors the angels use are good and lasting, and will stand the rain and the roughest weather, they remain on the leaves till this day. After this other angels came and stroked the boughs caressingly, and at their touch tender little blossoms began to sprout everywhere. There were little buds that made no great show enveloped in their long green sheaths, but when they opened such an exquisite perfume came out it filled the whole wood, and all the other trees looked at one another, and asked: "What is it smells so good? We have never smelt anything like it before! Not even

the wood strawberries, nor the wild thyme, smell half so sweet."

It was the clustering blossoms of the silver linden scenting the air. Now, when the birds saw the widespreading shade, so cool and inviting, they came flying in great numbers to nestle in it, and sang their sweetest songs. Then the bees in their turn perceived that there was something quite peculiarly fragrant about this tree, and they came by thousands and sipped and sipped and drew the sweetest honey from the blossoms. And whenever the sound of village church bells streamed up from the valley the tone was caught and held fast within the leafy dome, forming the keynote to the trill of the birds and the humming of the bees. The squirrels, too, were always leaping from branch to branch and from bough to bough, so that there was one perpetual round of mirth and song and dancing in that hospitable shade.

In autumn the linden leaves turn such a bright yellow it is as if they had drunk in the sunbeams to make the birds believe it is still warm. With all this the linden tree became the richest tree in all the world. And as it lives to a very great age—a linden tree is often many hundreds of years old—it is the great friend of all the countryside. Here is where the village

folk meet to rest and chat and smoke their pipes. Here is where games are played and songs sung and counsel held and sentence passed. The village linden tree is held by all the peasantry in high esteem, since it knows and takes part in all their concerns, both sad and joyous. Its blossoms furnish them with the best and most valuable honey, and its thick, luxuriant foliage yields the surest protection from the rain—not a drop can penetrate that close roof of leaves.

I have had somewhat the same experience as the linden tree. As a child I always thought I was not so good as the others, and not so well loved, because I was less lovable. And how I prayed that I might become better and worthier of being loved, and that God would also grant me the power in some way or other to set forth his praises, because my heart was always overflowing with thankfulness to see the world so beautiful, and to feel myself so full of youthful strength. And there in secret he planted in my breast the power of poetic song. But at first I did not understand rightly how glorious a gift God had given to me. I did not value it at all —I fancied every one could do just the same, if they only cared to try. And when I grew older and saw that it was really a gift bestowed upon me from on High, then I became still more

afraid to speak of it, lest I should be thought vain and boastful. I did not even dare to learn the rules of my art, nor to correct mistakes that I had made; I felt as if that would be scarcely honest and sincere. When I married, I had already written a large volume of poems, and had tried my hand as well at the drama and at prose, writing my first story at eleven years of age and my first play at fourteen. But I knew quite well that it was all very poor stuff. Not till I was five and thirty did I let anything be printed, and that was only because so many people took the pains to copy verses from my scrap-book that I wanted to spare them the trouble and simplify matters. After a time I began to search for a name under which I could hide myself, so that nobody might ever suspect who I really was. One morning I said to the doctor: "I want a very pretty, poetic name to publish under, and now that I am in Roumania, and belong to a Latin people, it must be a Latin name. Yet it must have something in it to recall the land I came from. How do you say 'forest' in Latin?"

"The forest is called silva—or, as some write it, sylva."

"That is charming! And what do you call a bird?"

"Avia."

"I do not like that. It is not pretty. What is the word for a short poem or song?"

"In Latin that is carmen."

I clapped my hands together. "I have my name. In German I am Waldgesang, the song of the woods, and in Latin that is carmen sylvae. But sylvae does not sound like a real name, so we must take a trifling liberty with it, and I will be called Carmen Sylva."

Since then I resemble the linden tree more and more. Many songsters come and take shelter under my branches and sing beneath my roof, and the bees are countless who work in my house. For it is no home for idlers; work is going on there from early morn till evening, my bees are always flying in and out. But I myself begin work earlier than any of them, for winter and summer I am up before the sun and at my work.

Woodsong, Carmen Sylva, is my name—the name under which I hid myself for so long, and if to-day I come forth from that shelter that was like the broad leaves of the silver-linden spread over me, it is because so many friends, and especially dear children, have asked it of me, and because I have white hair now and would so gladly be a grandmother if only God had granted me that blessing. I must e'en be all children's

grandmother, and never refuse them anything they ask. The Woodsong is indeed for all children if they will only listen to it, and it will gladden them all alike, whether they be rich or poor, well cared for or in want, whether they go barefoot or wear boots lined with costly fur. The Woodsong loves all alike that come to her, and pours out her whole soul for their delight. And her white hair is like the silver lining of the linden leaves—it gives a bright sheen to thoughts that were otherwise too grave, and she desires that within her shadow it may always be light.

What is it then to be a queen, if it is not like the silver linden tree to cast a protecting shadow over the world's sweetest songbirds, to offer shelter and refuge to all those whose finely wrought workmanship vies with the spider's skill; to be the providence of the industrious bees lest they perish in the winter? If all this be done, then indeed may life's autumn be as sunny as that golden foliage which seems to have retained the whole summer's warmth and light to radiate it forth again.

But it is harder for poor Carmen Sylva than for any other silver-linden. For God had once given her the loveliest song of all, and then he took it away from her again, because he wanted it in his own heaven. That song was her only

child, a little girl whose name was Marie, but who called herself Itty when she was so small that she could not say little, and so the name Itty clung to her. She glided about like a little fairy, as if she had wings, during the whole of her short life, she said the sweetest things, she would throw herself on the earth to kiss the sunbeams; she loved the trees, and the flowers, and the water; she danced along the steepest mountain paths as if there were no danger, no precipice below. And if ever I were sad, she sprang up behind me in the big armchair, and turned my face round to her and looked in my eyes to ask: "Are you not happy, mama?"

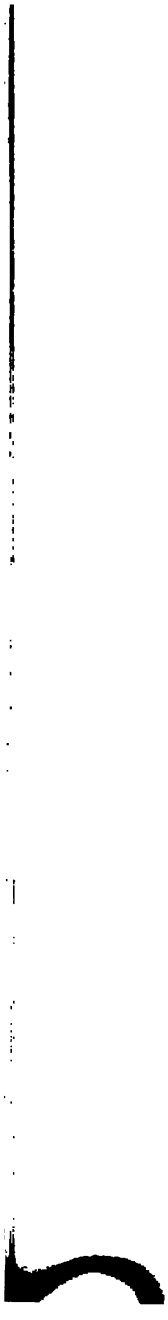
But God called her back to heaven because the little angel was missing there, which he had lent for a short time to earth, and it seemed to the poor linden tree as if it stood there desolate, and as if there were no voices to be heard in its branches, and as if the sky had suddenly darkened overhead, and the sun gave no more warmth.

But years afterward, all at once a soft murmur penetrated the sorrowing tree and stirred it to the very core, and then the sky grew bright again, and the birds sang once more, and the dried blossoms filled with honey, for it was the voice of Song and Story, the nearest approach this world can offer for the voice of Itty—con-

soling and gladdening the heart by endeavoring to give comfort and joy to others.

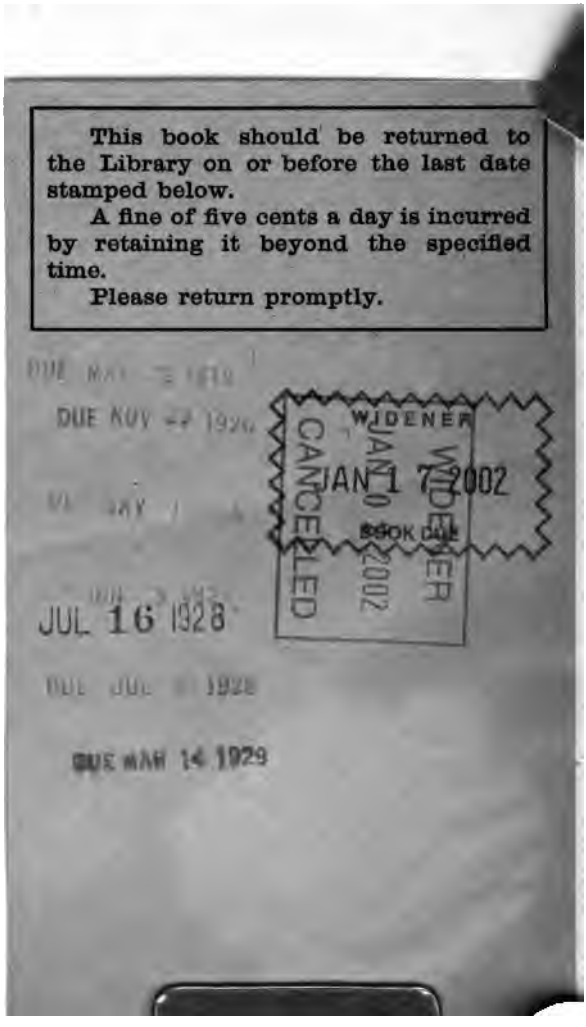
* * * * *

And now, dear children, I bid you farewell for the present. Next year I may have another volume for you. In the meantime I hope you will tell me which of these tales you like best and perhaps I will write sequels to some of them.





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